A map of the Pacific region showing military campaigns in 1943. The map includes East Asia (China, South Korea, Taiwan), Southeast Asia (Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, Philippines, Singapore), and Oceania (Australia, New Guinea, Solomon Islands). Numerous red and yellow circular markers with a cross symbol are placed across the map, indicating specific military operations or battles. A large red starburst is located in the Coral Sea. The text 'War in the Pacific' is centered at the top, followed by 'Defending Australia', 'Campaigns in New Guinea and the Solomons 1943', and '5 December 1942'.

# War in the Pacific

## Defending Australia

### Campaigns in New Guinea and the Solomons 1943

#### 5 December 1942

# Situation - 4 December 1942

- In the Pacific the USN, at the cost of enormous losses in ships and men, has done just enough to strangle the Japanese November offensive on Guadalcanal.
- In New Guinea the Japanese, aided by the terrain and very effectively fortified, continue to resist tenaciously in their beachheads. Australian and American forces suffer from wretched logistics and are struggling to supply their forces let alone bring in reinforcements and heavy weapons. Battle losses, tropical diseases, malnutrition and exhaustion are rapidly wearing down the forces.
- General Eichelburger, fortified by an interview with General MacArthur, has taken command at Buna. Reinforced by five Australian bren gun carriers, he is about to renew the attack.
- Three Australian militia battalions are about to take up the attack at Sanananda and Gona.

4. ENEMY'S PROBABLE NEXT MOVE

- (i) Further attempts to land supplies and reinforcements on Guadalcanal.
- (ii) Further attempts to reinforce New Guinea area.
- (iii) Continued submarine activity in the Indian Ocean.

TFR.

For A/DIRECTOR C.O.I.C.

5/12/42

# 5 December - Government

- The Australian Government was disposed to answer the difficulty with the New Zealanders by arguing, "We got in first", and, if the double demand caused any difficulty, New Zealand should wait her turn.
- That difficulty disappeared, however, on 5<sup>th</sup> December when Peter Fraser (photo) the New Zealand Prime Minister advised in a telegram to Curtin copying a telegram to Churchill that the New Zealand Government, in response to representations by Churchill, referred the whole matter to a secret session of the New Zealand House of Representatives which took a unanimous decision not to press at that juncture for the return of New Zealand troops.





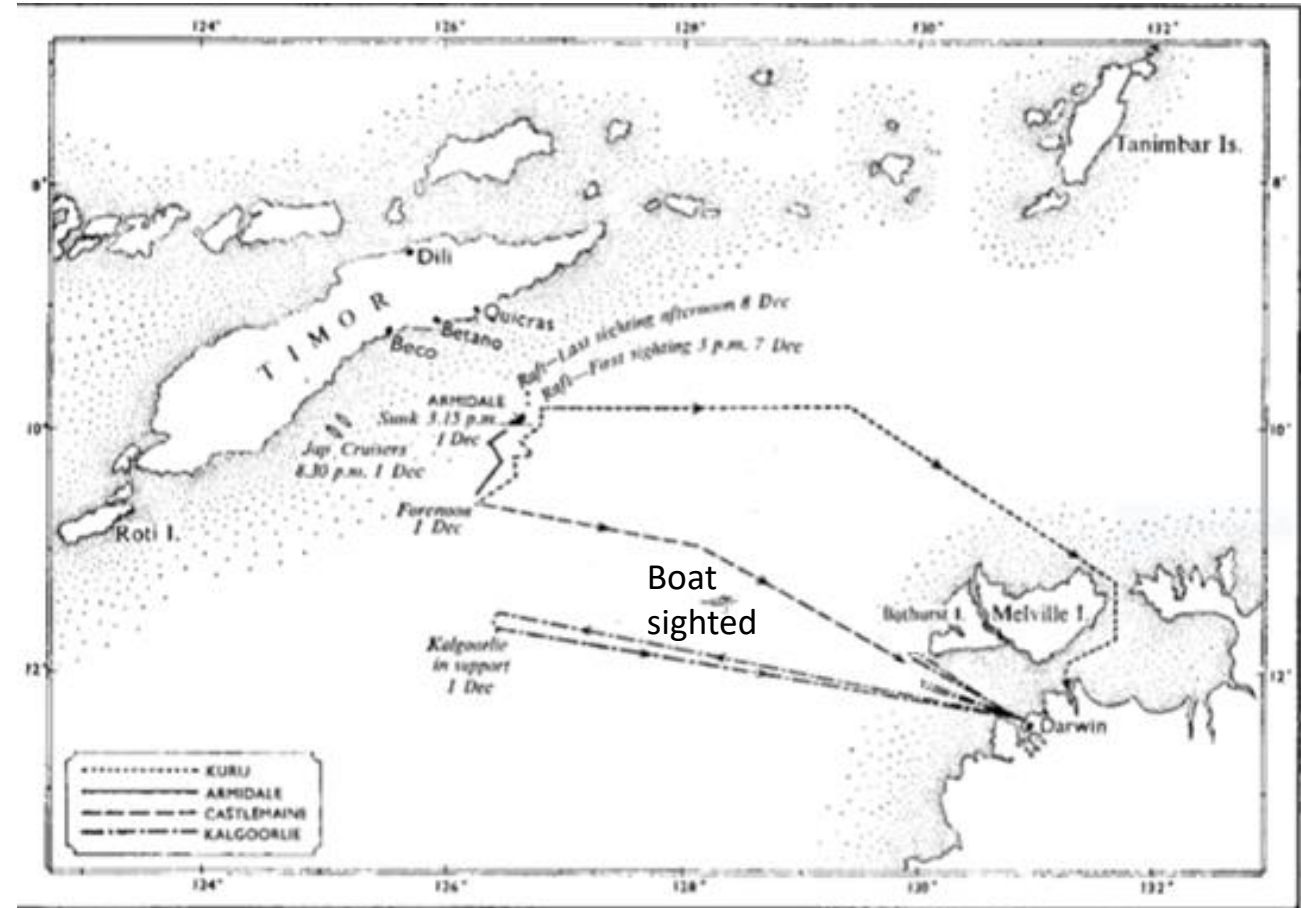
# 5 December - Industry

- In the Common Cause issue of 5th December 1942 the President's letter spoke of the fighting in New Guinea, the Solomons, Stalingrad and North Africa and declared:
  - “It is hell over there, and for each day industry loses, the hell is to go on for a day longer, or more men are to lose their lives, or worse still the possibility of our country becoming a war-torn Russia, or our cities becoming a Stalingrad, instead of us being able to tear up the countries and cities of the Fascists with the munitions our products provide.”
- In December the three inch mortar project was terminated, with a total production of 1,936 (nominally orders placed had been for 3,200); when total Army requirements were fixed at 1,550, plus 150 for overseas orders.



# 5 December - Sea

- At 10.15 a.m. on 5th December a boat with survivors was sighted at 11 degrees 19 minutes South, 128 degrees 20 minutes East—about 115 miles west of Bathurst Island and about 150 miles E.S.E. of where Armidale was sunk.
- The boat was making slow progress under sail.
- Pope, at once dispatched Kalgoorlie to the position, and she sailed from Darwin at 11.40 a.m.

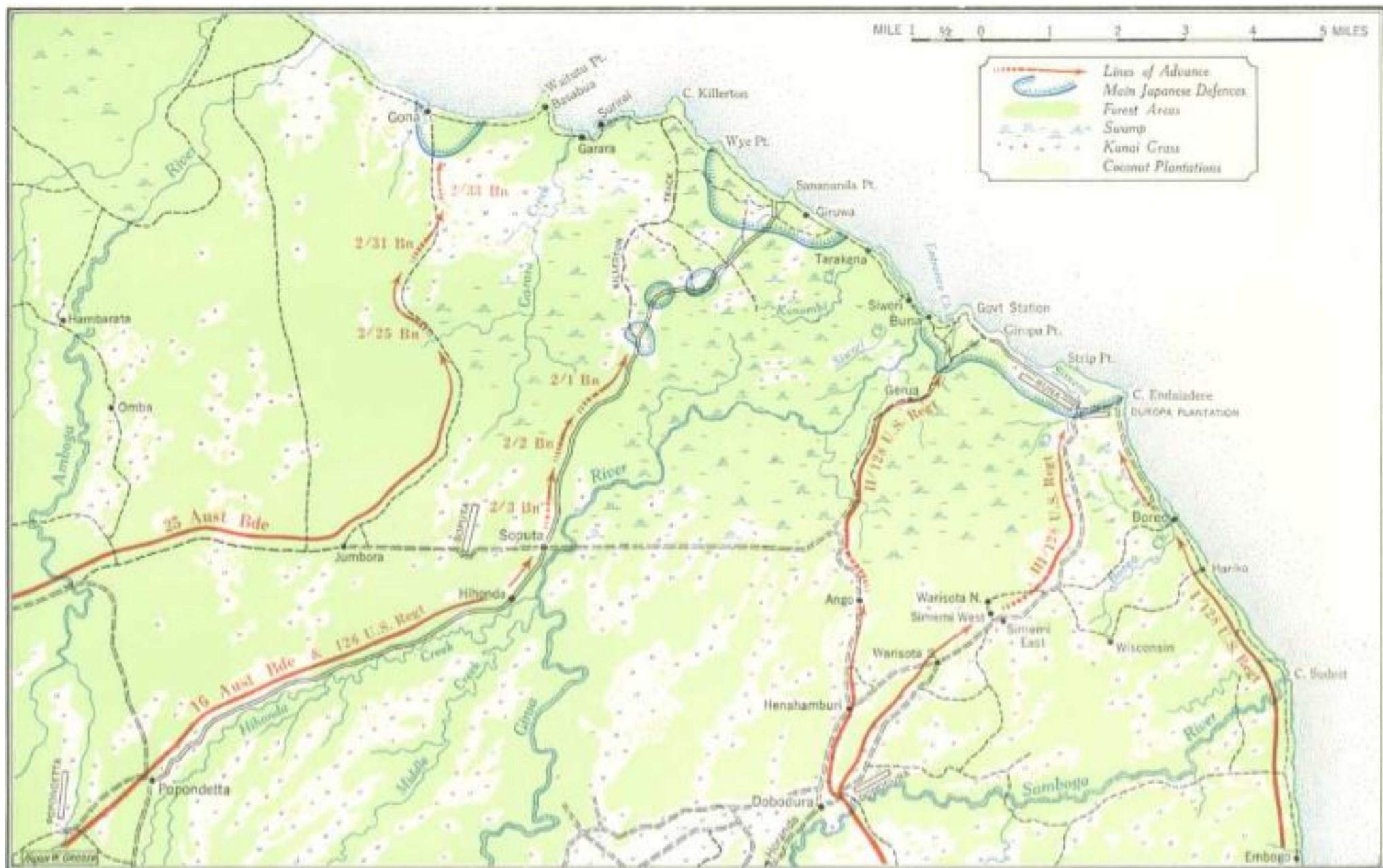


Loss of H.M.A.S. *Armidale*

# 5 December - Sea

- When the motor-boat set out Wednesday, 2nd December 80 survivors were left on the rafts and wreckage—55 of the ship's company, three A.I.F., and 22 N.E.I. troops. Armidale's gunnery officer, Lieutenant 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.
- 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.
- Since no Allied aircraft had been sighted by 11.15 a.m. on Saturday, 5th December (by which time the survivors were reduced by two with the deaths of Leading Cook Williams and one N.E.I. soldier), Lieutenant Palmer decided to try to reach the Allied reconnaissance area in the whaler.
- He took in her 25 of Armidale's ratings and the three A.I.F. soldiers, and steered south-east.
- There remained on the raft 28 of the ship's company, and on the Carley float 21 Dutch troops, including the two officers. The whole party was in charge of Sub-Lieutenant Buckland.

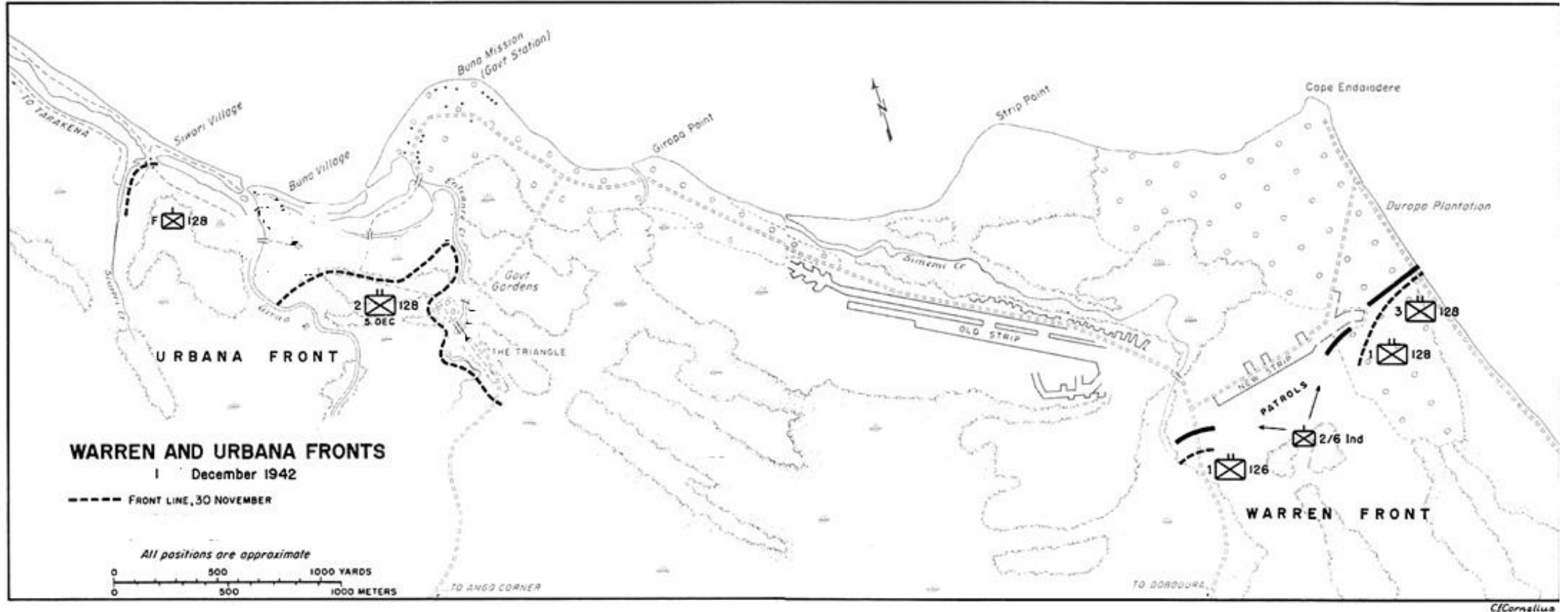




Allied advance on Buna, Sanananda and Gona, 16th-21st November  
War in the Pacific 1943 - ©Jerry McBrien - Wk 5



# 5 December – Buna



Situation at Buna morning of 5 December.

# 5 December – Buna E

- On the Warren front Colonel Miller's battalion was on the right, Colonel McCoy's on the left, and Colonel Carrier on the far left, with the 2/6 Independent Company intervening between him and McCoy.
- Company L and the Bren carriers were to attack straight up the coast on a 200-yard front. Company I was to follow in column on Company L's left rear, and machine gun crews of Company M were to clean out snipers in trees and give direct support to the advance.



# 5 December – Buna E

- Colonel McCoy's leading unit, Company A, 128th Infantry, was to move in on Company L's left and attempt to cross the eastern end of the New Strip. Colonel Carrier's 1st Battalion, 126th Infantry, was to advance northward against the bridge between the strips. Patrols of the Australian Independent Company were to make whatever gains they could in the area between Carrier and McCoy.
- Between 0820 and 0835 six A-20's bombed and strafed the area between the Old Strip and Cape Endaiadere. The artillery began to fire at 0830. Supported by mortar and machine gun fire from Company M, the Bren carriers and Company L left the line of departure at 0842.
- American fire was whipping the tree tops for snipers when the carriers broke cover, each with a crew of four, their speed held down to two miles an hour, partly to allow the infantry to keep pace, partly because the ground was spongy under their tracks and littered with fallen logs over which creepers twined. Sergeant Taylor's and Corporal Lucas' vehicles were on the right, Fergusson's in the centre, Corporal Orpwood's and Corporal Wilton's on the left.

# 5 December – Buna E

- A great volume of fire stormed about the carriers as they moved into the cleared space over which they must advance.
- In the centre carrier, Fergusson was heavily engaged by posts in front of him and sharpshooters commanding his open vehicle from the tree-tops.
- When his driver was hit he took over himself in the driving seat. He turned to look for the infantry who should have been supporting him and his carrier became jammed among fallen logs and trees. As he stood up to call to Taylor, near him on the right, a tree-top marksman shot him through the head. From Taylor's carrier, Locke shot this sniper, but within seconds, Corporal Davies, struggling to move Fergusson's body from the driving seat, was also shot dead.
- On the extreme right Lucas' carrier bellied on a log hidden in the long grass after it had travelled some 40 yards. The crew fought on from its shelter to give cover to Sergeant Taylor who was engaging a post about 50 yards to their left.



# 5 December – Buna E

- Corporal Orpwood's carrier had gone about 100 yards on Fergusson's left, when a grenade burst over its open top. Turning to crush the thrower, Orpwood became the target for a sharpshooter perched above him. He fell mortally wounded across the driver who temporarily lost control of his vehicle and then reversed into the cover provided by some bush and, under the protection of the forward infantry, removed his dying friend. Soon afterwards, however, his carrier stuck across a fallen log.
- Corporal Wilton's carrier was following to Orpwood's left rear, when it got caught astride a log which had lain across its path. In a free-for-all with Japanese riflemen who engaged them from trees Wilton's two gunners were wounded. The crew then fought on for some time with the forward infantry.



A universal carrier. See lack of overhead protection.

# 5 December – Buna E

- Taylor had crossed about 75 yards of cleared space when a torrent of fire from a strong post just in front of him, heavily barricaded and camouflaged with palm fronds so that it was most difficult to locate, stopped him momentarily.
- He and his crew pounded it with grenades and flailed it with machine-gun fire. As they circled to take it from the rear a mortar bomb exploded in the back of the vehicle, killing one of the crew.
- A Japanese soldier attempted to grenade them. Taylor leaped from the carrier to meet him and killed him in the open. They then silenced the post.
- Swinging his vehicle to the right Taylor then silenced a second post.
- As he was engaging a third post a burst shattered his left arm. With blood pouring from him he left the carrier to go to the assistance of Fergusson who was in difficulties farther to the left, while Private Locke's fire covered him.
- As the carrier moved in to the post again, its damaged motor stopped. Desperately Private Cameron, the driver, emptied his rifle into the Japanese until the rifle jammed and then struggled to right a stoppage in the Bren. As he was doing so he was hit in the head. Locke covered him out of the rear of the carrier and then, desperately wounded himself, fell among the torn scrub.

## 5 Dec – Buna E

- So, within half an hour, all five carriers lay abandoned.
- Lieutenant Fergusson was dead, and thirteen of the twenty others in the carriers were killed, wounded, or missing.



DISABLED BREN GUN CARRIERS *in the Duropa Plantation.*

## 5 December – Buna E

- Fergusson's 2ic, Lt. Ian Walker, on hearing of the disaster left his post at the rear on the run, accompanied by a single enlisted man. Covered by fire from Company L, 128th Infantry, the two men methodically removed the guns and ammunition from the three closest carriers. Walker then ordered the enlisted man back, took up a submachine gun, and went forward alone toward the two remaining carriers intending to recover their guns as well. Before he could reach the nearer of the two carriers, he fell mortally wounded.
- The Japanese succeeded in stripping the gutted hulks of the two carriers that night before a patrol of Warren Force sent out to recover the guns could get to them.



# 5 December – Buna E

- In attempting to support the Bren carriers, Company L, 128th Infantry, had also been hit hard. The center platoon suffered so many casualties in the first half-hour of fighting that it had to have help from the left platoon, which was itself under heavy fire. A platoon of Company I had to plug the resulting gap on the left before the attack could continue.
- The men tried to push forward but were unable to. They were blocked, not only by the heavy fire that came from behind the still-unreduced log barricade a few yards in from the coast and from the hidden and carefully sited strongpoints in the plantation, but by the intense heat of the morning. Man after man of Miller's battalion gave way to heat prostration. By 1010 the battalion had gained less than forty yards, and it could make no further advance that day.



# 5 December – Buna E

- the 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry began its move at 0855. The eighty-three men of Company A pushed off in the Y-shaped dispersal area at the eastern end of the New Strip. Company B was on their left rear, waiting to go in. Company D was disposed along the line of departure, supporting the advance by fire. Company A moved slowly and cautiously through the tall grass. Despite the heat and heavy casualties from enemy fire, they made good progress at first, and by 1100 most of them were across the lower arm of the Y.
- There they were halted by rifle grenade, mortar, and machine gun fire from three directions. By noon Japanese action and heat prostration had cut deep into Company A's strength, and Company B had to be ordered in on its left to relieve the pressure.



# 5 December – Buna E

- Company B reached the southeastern end of the strip two hours later at a point just west of the dispersal area occupied by Company A. Setting up light machine guns on the left to cover the strip, Company B tried to move across, but without success. As the men crawled out of the sheltering tall grass into the heat-ridden strip, heavy enemy fire from bunkers and hidden firing positions in the area immobilized them.
- Those who managed to get halfway across the strip could move neither forward nor back. Since further advance was impossible, the company began to consolidate at the eastern end of the strip.
- Company A was having an even rougher time than in the morning. At the center of the Y the troops encountered almost point-blank fire from three directions. All attempts to cross the northern prong of the Y failed.
- Men who tried to advance were either wounded or killed. By late afternoon the situation was seen to be hopeless, and Colonel Martin ordered the company to pull back as soon as it could. That evening he relieved it.



# 5 December – Buna E

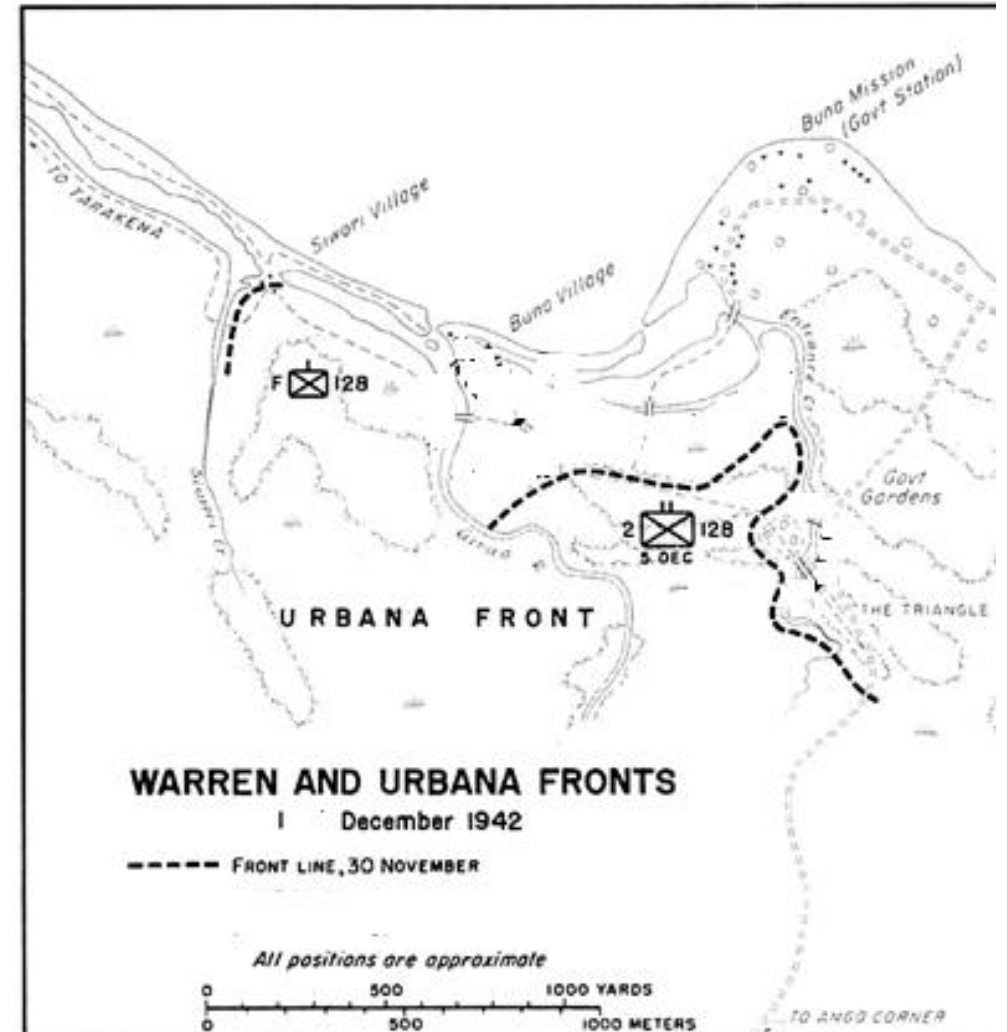
- At the western end of the strip Colonel Carrier's two companies in attack moved out against the bridge between the strips at 0850 and at first reported good progress.
- Aided by the mortars and the detachment's 37-mm. gun, they succeeded in knocking out seven enemy pillboxes during the first two hours of fighting.
- With the enemy fire from the pillboxes suppressed, the troops began to close on the bridge, only to be halted by heavy fire from front and left when they were 150 yards from their objective.
- Artillery fire was called in but was ineffective. The Japanese fire only increased in intensity.
- Colonel Carrier's troops, suffering from the heat like the companies on the right, made repeated attempts to advance, but the enemy fire was too heavy.
- Frontal attack was abandoned and an attempt was made to cross Simemi Creek in the hope of flanking the bridge. The attempt was given up because quicksand was reported and the creek was too deep.





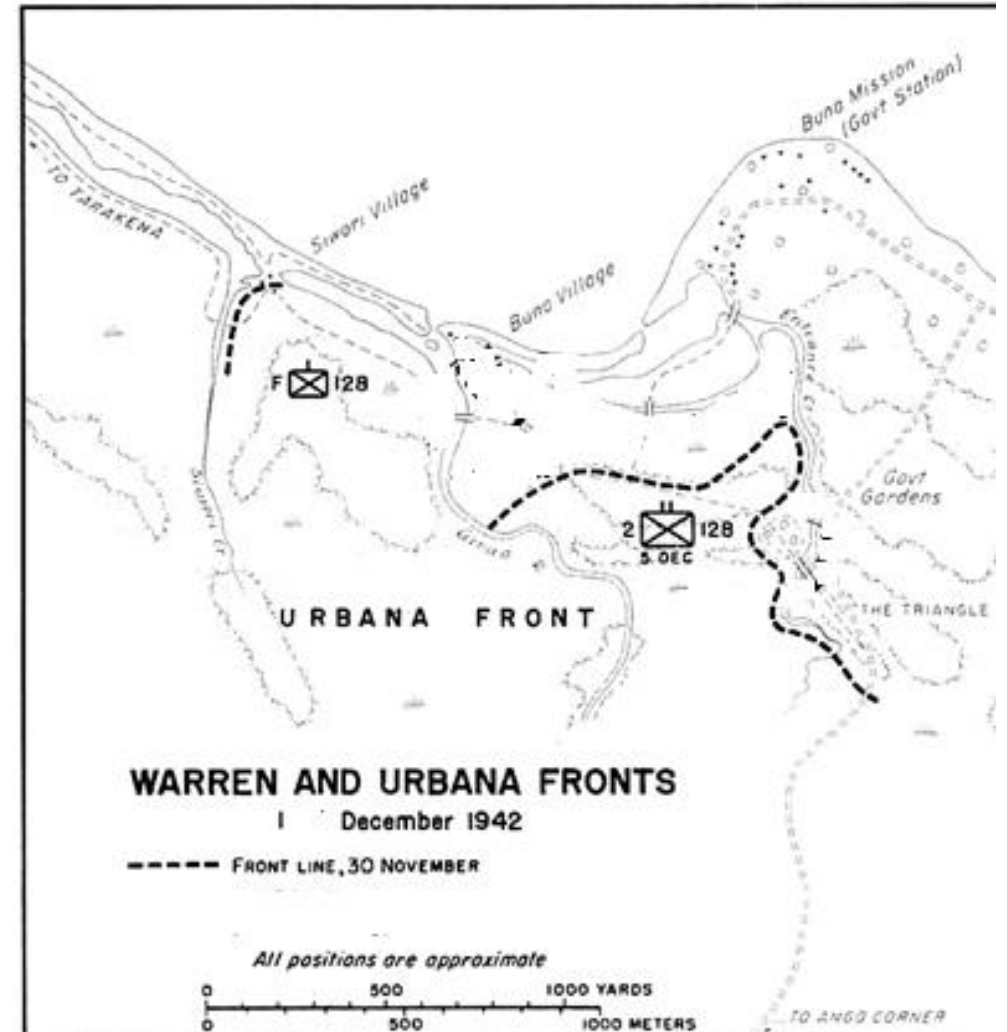
# 5 December – Buna W

- The plan called for the Cannon Company, 128th Infantry, and the 2d Battalion, 126th Infantry, to attack at specified points on the perimeter of Buna Village. Having suffered very heavy losses during previous attacks, Company F would be in reserve.
- Colonel Grose went to the front early in the morning. After getting the men into line and making a final check of their positions, he returned to his CP about 1015 to find General Eichelberger and General Waldron and half a dozen staff officers there.
- The attack opened at 1000 with a raid on the mission by nine B-25s.
- Eichelberger and his party were briefed and then went forward to observe the fighting.
- After the B-25's hit the target area, the artillery and the mortars began firing on the village. At 1030 the fire ceased, and the infantry moved forward.



# 5 December – Buna W

- The attack met strong opposition. On the far left the Cannon Company ran into heavy fire when it emerged onto an open space south of the village. The company sent out patrols to flank the enemy, the mortar men on the west side of the Girua River began firing on the village to relieve the pressure, and a platoon of Company F, 126th Infantry, under 1st Lt. Schwartz, moved in to reinforce the Cannon Company. None of these measures worked. The enemy fire continued, and the company could not advance.
- Company E, under Captain Schultz, also met tough opposition from the intrenched enemy. By dint of hard fighting, the line moved forward until it reached the Japanese main line of resistance about fifty yards from the village. There the advance was stopped completely, and the troops had to dig in.



## 5 December – Buna W

- That Company E pushed even that far in the face of the heavy enemy fire was due principally to the able leadership of two platoon leaders, 1st Lt. Thomas Knode and 1st Sgt. Paul Lutjens, who were severely wounded as they led their men in the day's fighting.
- In Lutjens' platoon, Sgt. Harold Graber, had helped to push the line forward. When the platoon was pinned down, Sergeant Graber leaped to his feet, fired his light machine gun from the hip, and cleaned out a main Japanese strongpoint which had been holding up the advance--an act that cost him his life.
- Company G, under Captain Bailey, was also finding it difficult to make any progress.

# 5 December – Buna W

- Disappointed that the attack had bogged down just outside the village, General Eichelberger took direct control of operations. He called Grose forward to the observation post and sent Colonel Tomlinson back to the command post.
- Then he ordered Company F to pass through Company E and take the village.
- Colonel Grose immediately protested the order. Instead of committing Company F, his last reserve, to the center of the line, Grose had hoped to use it at a more propitious moment on the left. He told General Eichelberger that there was nothing to be gained by hurrying the attack, that it was the kind of attack that might take "a day or two."
- General Eichelberger had apparently set his heart on taking Buna Village that day and overruled his protest.
- Summoned to the observation post, 1st Lt. Robert Odell, who had taken command of Company F a few days before, was, as he put it, "surprised to see a couple of generals--one a three star--in addition to the usual array of majors and colonels."

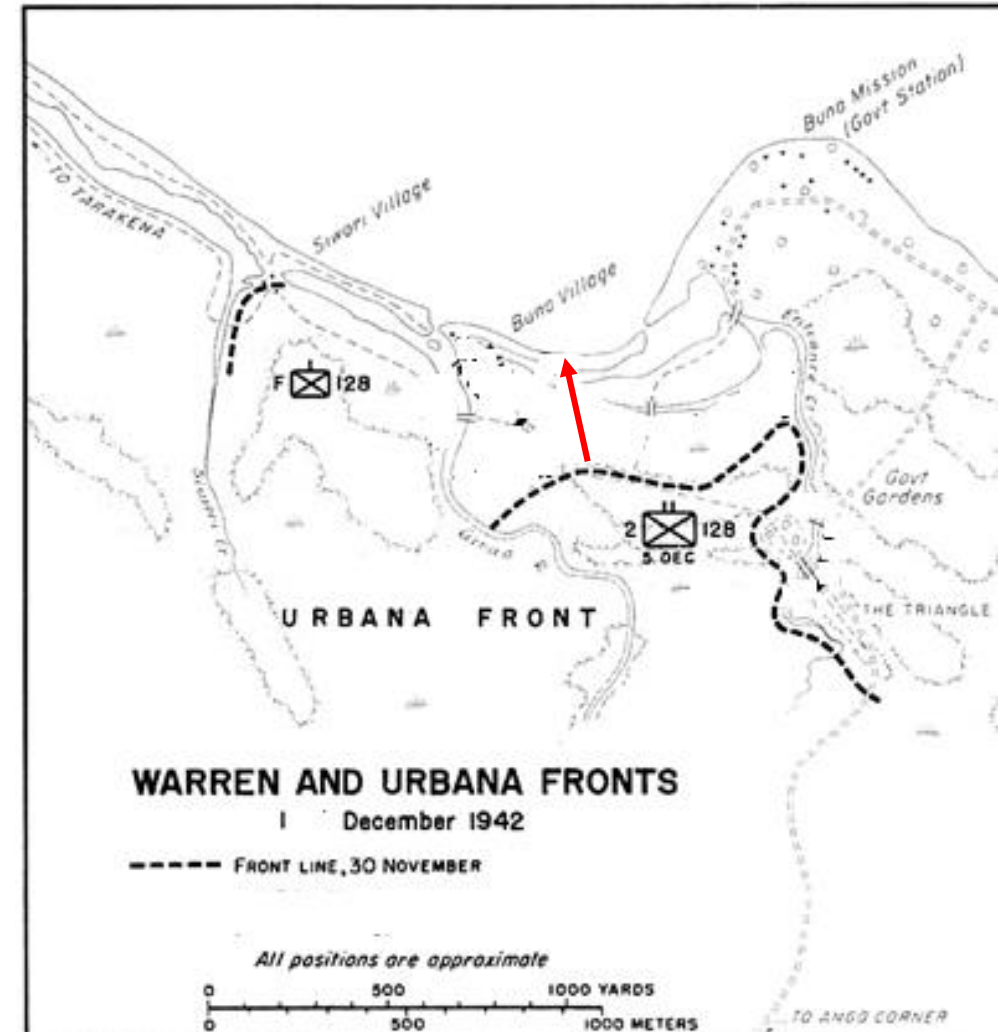


# 5 December – Buna W

- To continue in Odell's own words,
- The Lieutenant General explained what he wanted, and after a brief delay, I brought up the company and deployed accordingly.
- Pravda [1st Sgt. George Pravda] was to take half the company up one side of the trail, and I the other half on the other side. We were given ten minutes to make our reconnaissance and to gather information from the most forward troops which we were to pass. It was intended that we finish the job--actually take the Village--and [it was thought] that we needed little more than our bayonets to do it.
- Well, off we went, and within a few minutes our rush forward had been definitely and completely halted. Of the 40 men who started with me, 4 had been (known) killed, and 18 were lying wounded. We were within a few yards of the village, but with . . . no chance of going a step further. . . . [Pravda] was among the wounded, and casualties were about as heavy on his side.

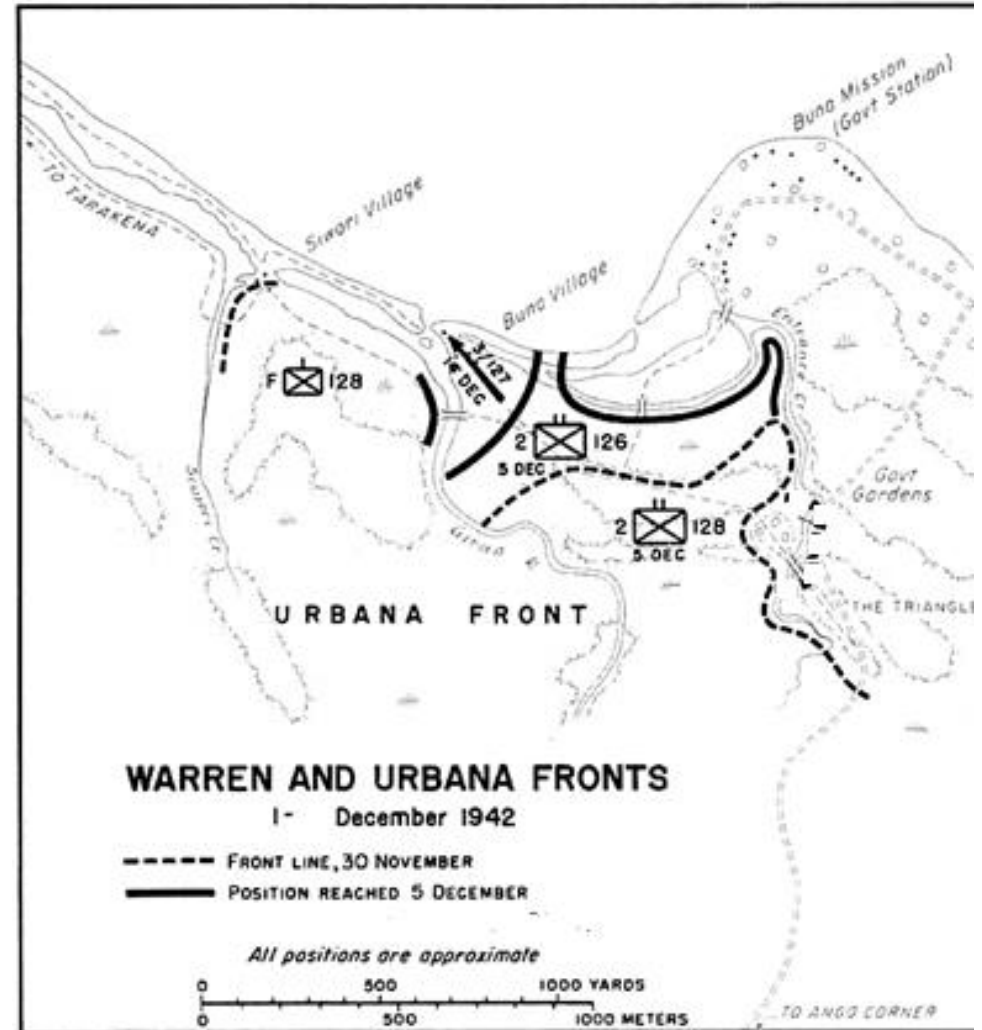
# 5 December – Buna W

- Just after Company F's attack had been brought to a halt news was received from Captain Bailey on the right.
- Instead of continuing the profitless attack directly on the village, a platoon under S. Sgt. Herman Bottcher, which had been attached to Company G, had pushed north from its position on the far right.
- Knocking out several pillboxes en route, Bottcher had successfully crossed a creek under enemy fire and by late afternoon had reached the beach with eighteen men and one machine gun.
- Bottcher, an experienced soldier who had served with the Republicans in the Spanish Civil War, ordered his men to dig in at once on the edge of the beach.
- Attacks followed from both the village and the mission, but Bottcher and his riflemen, with Bottcher himself at the machine gun, made short work of the enemy.
- The beach on either side of Bottcher's Corner was soon piled with Japanese corpses, whom neither friend nor foe could immediately bury.



# 5 December – Buna W

- Bottcher's break-through completed the isolation of the village.
- The Cannon Company, 128th Infantry, and the 2d Battalion, 126th Infantry were now pressed tightly against its inner defenses, and the troops at Bottcher's Corner cut it off from reinforcement.
- The 2d Battalion, 128th Infantry had meanwhile invested the entire west bank of Entrance Creek except for the Coconut Grove.
- With the village cut off and Entrance Creek outposted along its entire length, the early fall of the village was assured, provided the Japanese did not in the meantime succeed in their attempts to evict the attackers, particularly those at Bottcher's Corner.



## 5 December – Buna

- General Waldron had been pushing the assault personally in the right center of the line. During Company F's attack he received a shoulder wound and had to be evacuated. General Eichelberger's appointed General Byers, his chief of staff to succeed Waldron as commander of the troops at the front.
- Writing to General Sutherland, Eichelberger noted that the troops had fought hard, that morale had been high, and that there had been "much to be proud of during the day's operations."

## Air – 5 December

- Six A-20s and seventeen B-25s had pounded Buna mission and Sanananda area in support of the ground action. One B-25 crash landed on return to base.
- Enemy small craft were reported operating between Buna and Morobe (75 miles to the northwest) during the night.
- Two B-24's bomb Kavieng A/F scoring hits on the runway and in dispersal areas and setting at least one plane on fire.
- Reconnaissance at Rabaul revealed 49 fighters, 1 medium and 2 dive bombers at Lakunae and 24 medium bombers and 2 fighters at Vunakanau.
- 24 Japanese planes bombed Chittagong harbour, but caused no important damage.

# 6 December - Sea

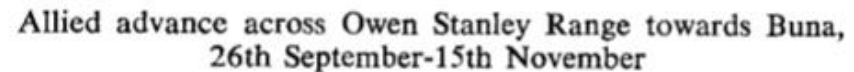
- Kalgoorlie reached the vicinity of the sighting of Armidale's motor-boat at 02.30 6<sup>th</sup> December, and proceeded to search the area.
- That afternoon a Japanese reconnaissance aircraft sighted Kalgoorlie, and two bombers attacked for half an hour from 4.40 p.m. and aimed a total of 16 bombs at the ship, the nearest landing some 50 feet away. Kalgoorlie fought back.
- At 22.00 6th December, Kalgoorlie sighted a red Very light, and an hour later she picked up the 20 survivors from the motor-boat (two of its original company had died—Ordinary Seaman Smith and one N.E.I. soldier). They were in poor shape. Many were wounded (two died in Kalgoorlie) and Richards, Armidale's commanding officer, was speechless with exhaustion, and unable to impart much information.
- Litchfield, Kalgoorlie's commanding officer, was now faced with the alternative of seeking the rafts or returning to Darwin with the survivors he had on board. He decided to return to Darwin.



HMAS *Kalgoorlie* was one of sixty Australian Minesweepers (commonly known as corvettes) built during World War II in Australian shipyards

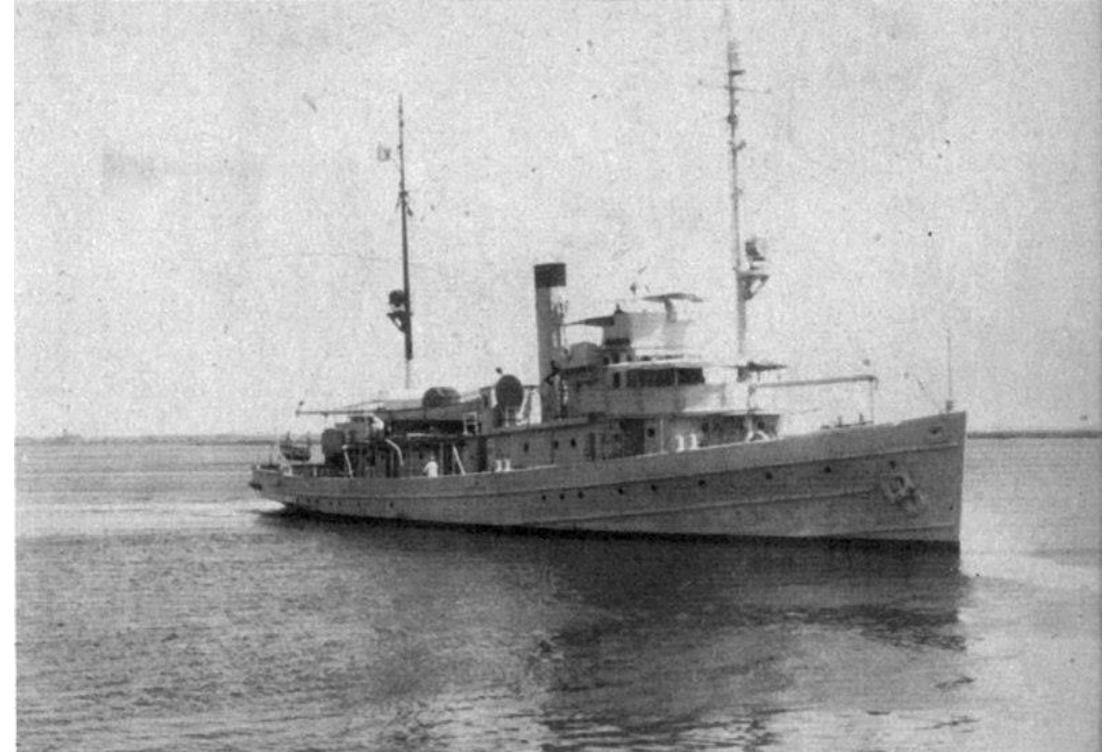


- It was decided to send the ships of the first LILLIPUT flight forward one at a time to Oro Bay at 48-hour intervals.
- Meanwhile small ships carried on.



# 6 December - Sea

- It was in tending to one of these small ships that Commander Sinclair, the harbour master at Oro Bay, was fatally wounded when enemy dive bombers attacked the motor vessel Kurimarau (288 tons) which he was piloting off Porlock Harbour on 6th December.
- Kurimarau was towing a barge carrying two 25-pounder guns the big, awkward barge blundering along in tow . . . . Just before dusk, three Jap planes came bombing and strafing. . . . The damage forced the ship to return to Porlock.
- Sinclair, who had piloted the last convoy out of Singapore, died in Port Moresby the next day.
- The fleet tug USS Grebe, a former Lapwing-class minesweeper, ran aground at Vuata Vatoa, Fiji Islands on 6 December, while attempting to tow Edison off the beach.



USS Grebe, AT-134.

# 6 December – Buna and Sanananda

- **Buna E**

- General Eichelberger was satisfied that the enemy line was too strong to be breached by frontal assault.
- Herring had informed him that he could very shortly expect the arrival of tanks and fresh Australian troops for action on his side of the river.
- He decided therefore to try no more all-out frontal assaults on the Warren front until he had received the promised reinforcements. Meanwhile he ordered Colonel Martin to have his men begin vigorous patrolling in order to locate and pinpoint the individual enemy positions. As soon as they located an enemy strongpoint, they were to destroy it. The troops were to move forward by infiltration, and not by frontal assault.

- **Buna W**

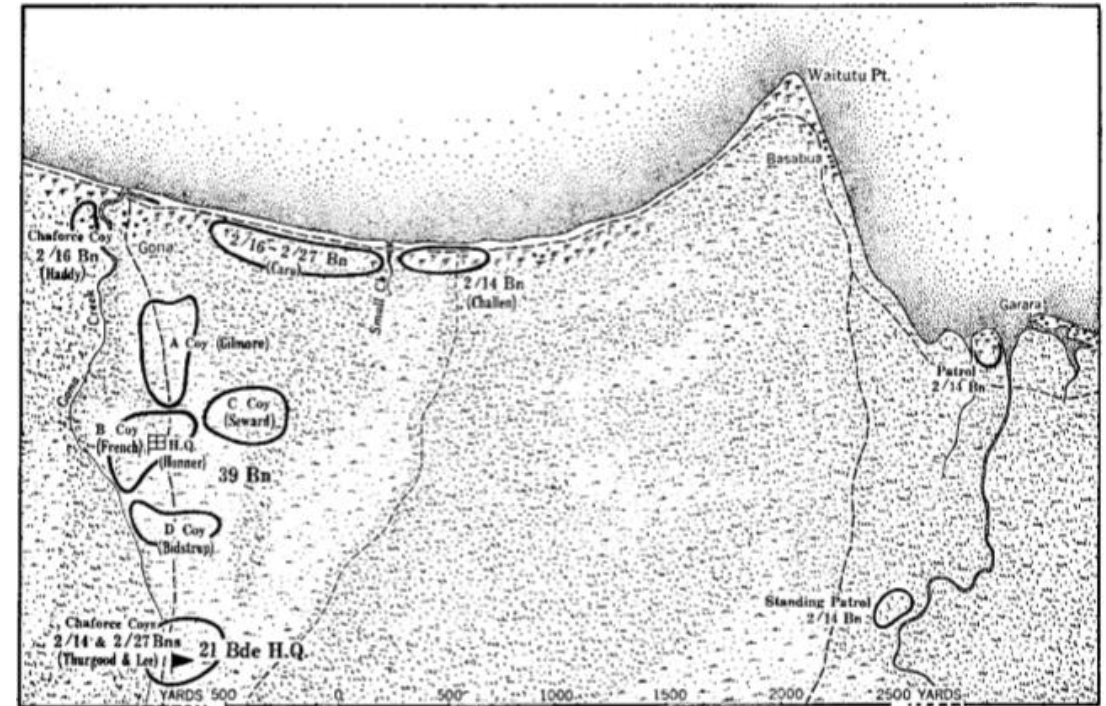
- The 2d Battalion, 126th Infantry, was reorganized on 6 December. Colonel Grose returned to the rear, and Tomlinson went on with preparations for an attack scheduled to be launched the next morning.

- **Sanananda**

- Another attempt to get rations and ammunition through to the roadblock on 6 December failed.

# 6 December - Gona

- On the 6th, Brigadier Dougherty launched still another attack on Gona.
- The remaining troops of the 2/16 and 2/27 Battalions, now organized as a composite battalion, jumped off from their positions east of the mission and attacked straight west along the beach.
- The 39 Battalion moved up from the south and attacked northwest, hoping to reduce the village.
- The result was the same as before: heavy casualties and only a slight improvement in the Australian position.



Dispositions, 6 p.m. 4th December

# 6 December - Air

- Two B-17's bomb Lakunai A/F and town of Rabaul in the early morning. – results not observed
- Afternoon of 6 Dec six B-25s bomb A/F at Lae. All bombs in target area.
- Night of 6/7 four patrol bombers attacked Kavieng and claimed hits on probable bomb dumps, causing three large fires and heavy explosions as well as hits on the runway.
- The airfield at Popondetta was unsuccessfully attacked by about fifteen enemy bombers escorted by sixteen fighters.
- Supply vessels near Porlock harbour and a small vessel north of Fergusson Island were attacked by eighteen enemy bombers with fighter escort. No damage is reported. One bomber was shot down.
- Cocos island (550 miles southwest of Sumatra) was bombed by three Japanese aircraft. One building demolished and one casualty.
- P-39s, strafing Munda, discover trucks, steam rollers, and other construction equipment, and evidence of 2 airstrips under construction.

## 7 December - COIC

- Information from the crew of the blockade runner "RAMSES", which was scuttled 800 miles W, by N. of Shark Bay 28/11 while inward bound for Bordeaux indicates that:
- "RAMSES" dry docked September 1942 and sailed for Kobe October 10, where she loaded 3000 tons of whale oil for discharge at Bordeaux, Building materials and machinery were loaded for Balik Papan, and discharged there, while "RAMSES" refuelled. At Batavia (arrived 15 November) 4000 tons of rubber, 1500 cases of quinine and a small quantity of tea were loaded. This cargo together with the whale oil loaded at Kobe is a fair indication of the nature of cargoes carried by inward bound blockade runners. "RAMSES" left Batavia 22 November for Bordeaux and was intercepted 28/11.

# 7 December - Sea

- Forewarned by Coastwatchers thirteen U.S. SBDs located 10 Japanese destroyers in The Slot at about nightfall and hit and stopped one of the destroyers.
- Major Sailor leading the strike was winged by the ships' anti aircraft and subsequently downed by one of eight defending Petes.
- The other destroyers went on south to Guadalcanal but were intercepted by eight PT boats barring the way between Savo and Cape Esperance supported by a cruiser floatplane as an illuminator.
- About 2315 the striking force of PTs 59, 36, 37 and 44 emerged from the lee of Savo and fired a dozen torpedoes, causing the Japanese to recoil.
- During this skirmish PT 59 exchanged machine gun bursts with one of the destroyers, suffering ten hits but no casualties.
- PT 109 and 43, still barring the way with torpedoes still available and supported by their illuminator, were sufficient to dissuade the Japanese from any attempt to land their supplies.



# 7 December - Sea

- Kalgoorlie reached Darwin at 1.30 p.m. on the 7th.
- An hour or two after Kalgoorlie reached Darwin an allied aircraft sighted the rafts in position about 280 miles N.W. by W. of Darwin—about 33 miles north-east of where Armidale had sunk. There appeared to be 25 to 35 men in three groups, near to each other. The last sighting by this aircraft was at 3.56 p.m.
- Within minutes of the aircraft's report being received, Pope ordered Vigilant to the position.
- Soon afterwards Pope learnt that a Catalina aircraft had been sent from Cairns. He then cancelled the order and directed Vigilant to lie off the north-west corner of Melville Island in anticipation of the aircraft sighting the raft.



HMAS *Kalgoorlie* was one of sixty Australian Minesweepers (commonly known as corvettes) built during World War II in Australian shipyards

# 7 December - Sea



The SS Neptuna explodes during the Bombing of Darwin on 19 February 1942. HMAS Vigilant is directly in front of the explosion.



HMAS Vigilant in 1941 (the Awnings were removed after the outbreak of the Pacific War)

# 7 December - Sea

- The transport Hino Maru No3 was torpedoed and sunk in the South China Sea 135 miles west south west of Minami, Iwo Jima (23°30'N 138°20'E) by USS Kingfish on 7 December.
- USS Bunker Hill, third of the Essex class carriers was launched on 7<sup>th</sup> December 1942.
- USS Belleau Wood, third of the Independence class light carriers, had been launched on 6<sup>th</sup> December.



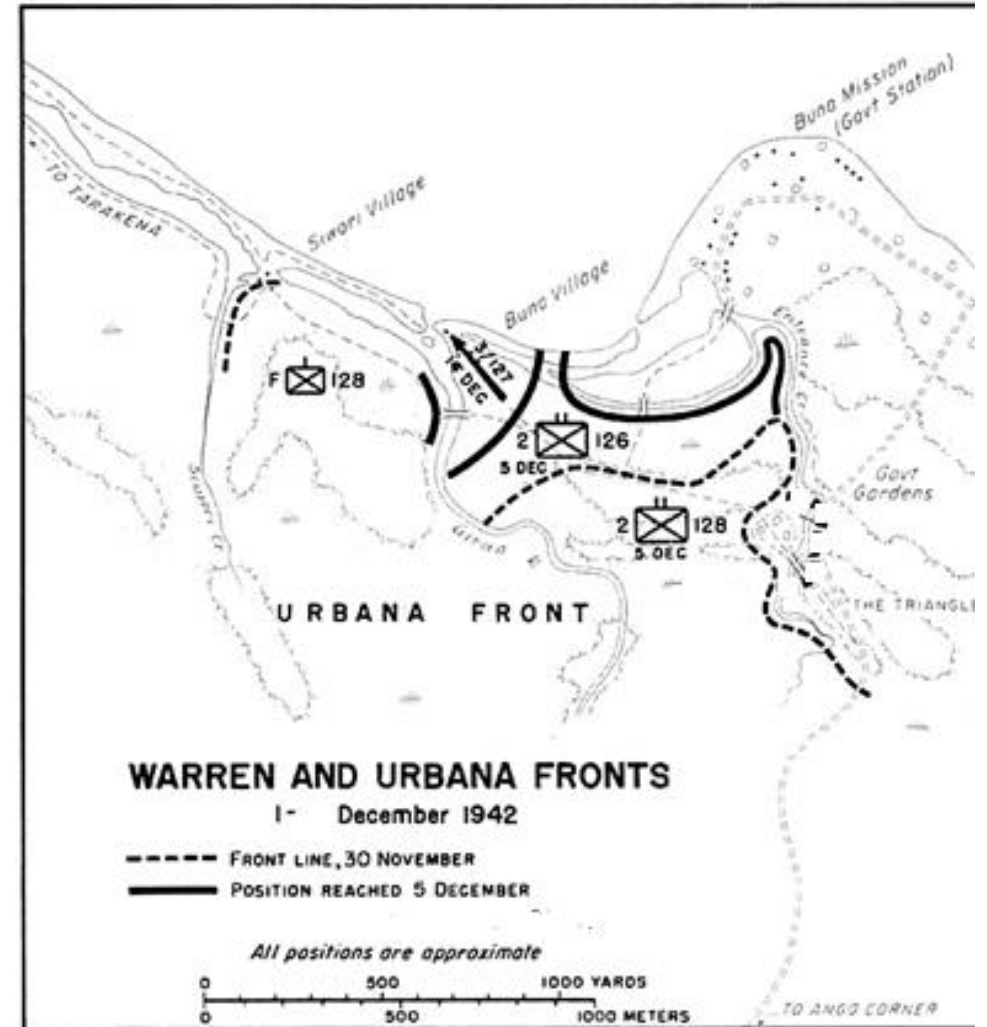
USS Belleau Wood

# 7 December – Buna E

- On 7 December Colonel Martin explained the new tactics to his battalion commanders. There was to be constant patrolling by small groups. After the artillery had worked over the enemy emplacements, the patrols were to knock them out one at a time, with mortar, grenade, and rifle. They were to subject the enemy line to constant probing. Instead of rushing ahead, they were to feel their way forward.
- The 37-mm. guns and mortars fired on the bunkers as they were located, and the artillery, aided by Wirraways now based at Dobodura, joined in. But the 37-mm. guns and the mortars were too light to have much effect on the bunkers, and the 3.7-inch mountain howitzers and the 25-pounders using high explosive shells with superquick fuse proved little more effective.
- Because it had a higher angle of fire and its shells had delay fuses, the 105-mm. howitzer was much better suited to the task, and soon proved itself to be the only weapon on the front which was effective against the enemy bunkers. By comparison, the 25-pounder with its flatter trajectory had only a limited usefulness. Not only was it often unable to clear the trees, but it could not drop its projectiles on the bunkers as could the 105.
- The 105-mm. howitzer could have been even more effective had it been properly supplied with ammunition. But shells for it were very slow in coming forward. After having fired the initial few hundred rounds with which it reached the front, the 105 had to remain silent for days.
- Ammunition for the 105 finally began reaching the front during the second week in December, and then only in small amounts.

# 7 December – Buna W

- At 0600 in the morning of 7 December, before the 126<sup>th</sup> were scheduled to attack, the Japanese attacked the troops at Bottcher's Corner from both the village and the mission.
- Urbana Force telephoned the following description of the action: "Bottcher opened fire on the Buna Mission force first, stopping that attack. He then turned his gun on the Buna Village force, and stopped that attack. During the attack, Bottcher was shot in the hand. He was given first aid treatment, and is now commanding his gun."
- Cpl. Harold L. Mitchell of Company H, had joined Bottcher's little force the previous day. Acting as a forward outpost, Mitchell detected the enemy force from the village while it was creeping forward under cover of the jungle.
- Just as it was about to launch its attack, he charged at the Japanese suddenly with a loud yell and bayonet fixed. Mitchell so surprised and dumbfounded them that instead of continuing with the attack they hesitated and momentarily fell back.
- His yell alerted the rest of the force, with the result that when the Japanese finally did attack they were cut down. Mitchell escaped without a scratch.



# 7 December – Buna W

- Companies E and G jumped off at 1335 after a fifteen-minute artillery and mortar preparation. They met heavy opposition and made little headway.
- To encourage his troops in their attempts to advance, Major Smith moved to the most exposed forward positions. Less than an hour after the attack began he was severely wounded.
- The attack made no progress whatever. At 1430 Company F was committed in support of Company E and Company G, and the remaining platoon under Lieutenant Odell was ordered to Bottcher's Corner. The line still did not move forward.
- Odell's orders had been to move onto the fire-swept beach and clear out two suspected enemy outposts: one northwest of Bottcher's Corner; the other closer to the village. The first outpost gave no trouble--the enemy troops in it were either dead or dying.
- The second was a different matter. Odell's platoon, down to a dozen men, began closing in on the objective, when it found itself faced with about fifteen Japanese in a hastily dug trench. As the platoon edged forward, one of the Japanese called out in English that he and his fellows would surrender if the Americans came over to them first. The men (as the battalion journal notes) treated the offer as a "gag." They stormed the trench and mopped up the Japanese, but heavy fire from the village ultimately drove them back to the Corner.
- An attempt that evening by the Japanese to send boats through to the village from the mission was frustrated when Sergeant Bottcher detected the leading barge and set it on fire with his machine gun. The barge was pulled back to the mission, a blazing hulk.

# 7 December - Sanananda

- Losses due to fever had been few at first, but by the end of the first week in December 20 percent of the command had contracted it, and the percentage was rising. On 7 December Major Baetcke and Zeeff both came down with malaria and had to be evacuated. Major Boerem took command of the entire force, which now numbered fewer than 800 men.
- The 30th Brigade under Brigadier Porter relieved the 16th Brigade that day, and Boerem came under Porter's command.
- One of Porter's first acts was to relieve Companies C, D, and L in the front lines near the track junction, and to replace them with his 49 and 55/53 Battalions.
- Believing that none of the Americans could be spared, Porter would not accede to a request by Boerem that the American troops be withdrawn to the rear for rest and reorganization.



*(Australian War Memorial)*  
Lieut-Colonel O. A. Kessels, C.O. 49th Battalion; Brigadier S. H. W. C. Porter, commanding 30th Brigade; Lieut-Colonel N. L. Fleay, O.C. Kanga Force; Lieut-Colonel W. T. Owen, C.O. 39th Battalion; and Major J. A. E. Findlay, Owen's second-in-command. Port Moresby, July 1942.



# 7 December - Sanananda

- Porter ordered the Australian 49th battalion to attack frontally toward the road junction in an attempt to break through to the roadblock.
- He ordered all of Major Boerem's troops, except those in the roadblock and west of the roadblock, to take up supporting positions immediately to the rear of the 49 and 55/53 Battalions.
- A night of drenching rain was followed on the 7th by bright sunshine. After standing-to in the dawn the 49th Battalion pulled back to allow the guns and mortars to register. There they waited to go in behind the barrage. Each man was carrying five days' rations (two days' hard, three days' emergency), two grenades and 100 rounds of ammunition, and a groundsheet.
- About two men in each section carried Owen guns; it was the first time the battalion had used them. When the registration shoots were finished Colonel Kessels moved his men back to their previous positions.
- For a few minutes they waited while the barrage fell ahead of them. Through it the morning sun shone, and back through the exploding curtain Japanese fire whipped into the waiting men and struck a number of them down even before they began to move.
- At 9.45 a.m., as they went forward through the bush, Captain Forster's company led on the right with Captain Bryce's abreast on the left. Captain Noyes' company followed behind Forster's and Captain Thorn's behind Bryce's. All were quickly swallowed up in the bush. Soon they began to lose very heavily. Forster's men pressed on for some hundreds of yards and overran a number of Japanese positions. Forster himself was wounded but Lieutenant A. R. Tolmer (who had himself been slightly wounded the previous afternoon) carried on. He got one platoon some 700 or 800 yards forward until they linked with Lieutenant Moore's men of the 2/2nd, who had been forming the right forward extremity of the Allied horseshoe.

# 7 December - Sanananda

- On the left Bryce's company were being badly torn by fire from Japanese positions on the left of the track; Bryce himself was wounded. Lieutenant Unsworth, his second-in-command, took over, although wounded himself, and carried on until he was killed. Lieutenant Hughes was killed at the head of his platoon. The company seemed to lose direction slightly and veered too far to the right in the shrouding bush until finally all their impetus was gone.
- Colonel Kessels was moving between these leading companies and the second wave. He could only communicate with his companies by runner. It was intended that the companies should each have a 108-wireless set. However, five minutes before the start of the attack the sets had not arrived so the company commanders were told to take telephones and cable instead, but finally, though they had the instruments, at least three of the companies had to go forward without line. This lack of communications, the thick bush and the fog of war, made it impossible to control the movement of companies.
- The gap between Forster and Bryce in front, and Noyes and Thorn in the rear, widened from the planned 200 yards. When Noyes and Thorn finally pushed ahead they were some 500 yards in rear of the forward companies and the Japanese had time to recover in some measure from the first onslaught before meeting the second.
- On the right, part of Noyes' company tangled early with Thorn's men on their left. Both groups there held and badly cut about. The rest of Noyes' company staggered ahead with a great volume of fire pouring into them from their left, although, strangely, few of them saw any Japanese. By the time they had covered about 800 yards only about 35 out of the original 98 in the company were still with the commander. All of the platoon commanders were down. But Noyes stayed in this new position for five hours until, having decided that the day was lost, he brought his men back.

# 7 December - Sanananda

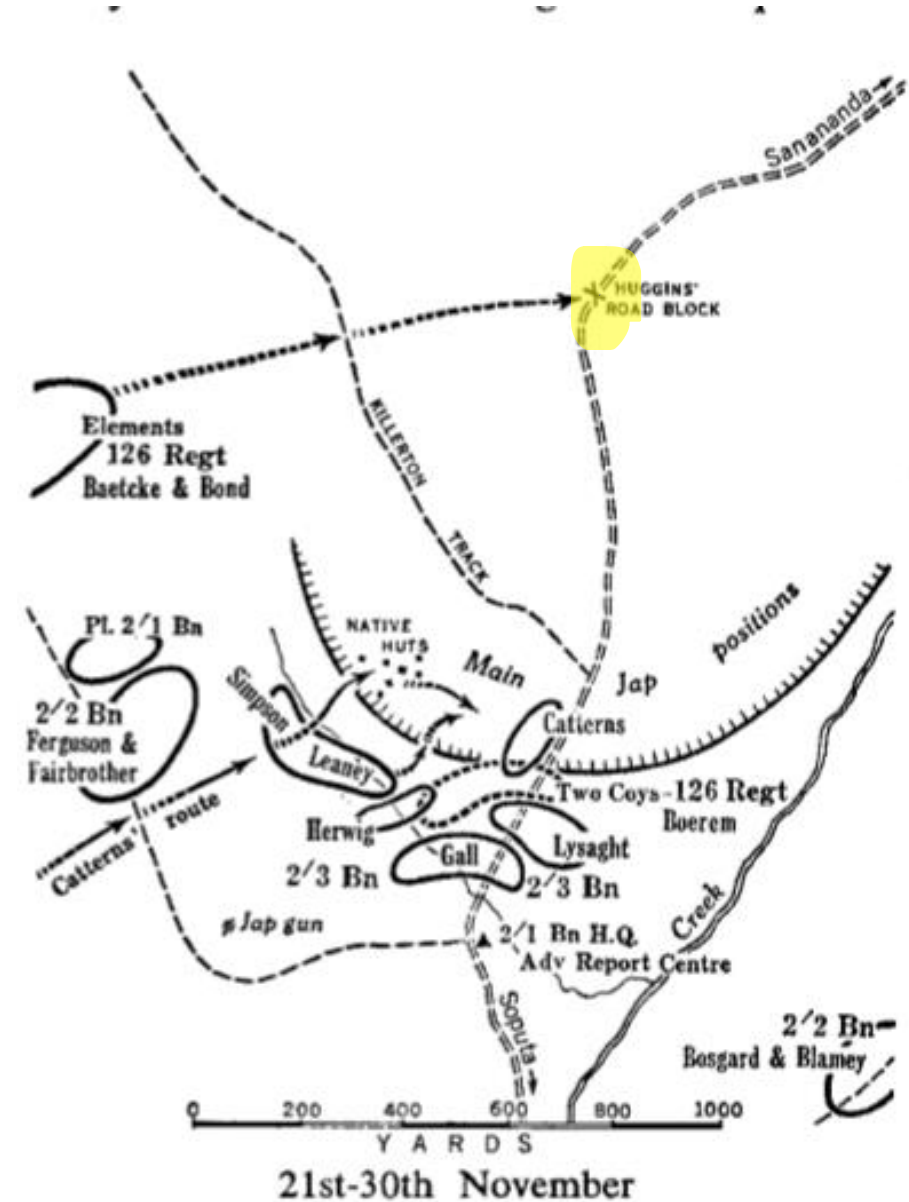
- In the vicinity of the track Thorn's men had at first pushed strongly ahead. Then fire slashed murderously through them from Japanese positions which had lain motionless beneath the first wave, and, in enfilade, from the left of the track where other positions commanded the left flank of the attack. Thorn himself was killed together with two of his lieutenants, Forster and Morrison, and many of his men. And so the attack of these companies crumbled.
- Porter then went ahead with his plans for an attack by the 55th/53rd Battalion.
- Now Lovell ordered Captain Reid's and Major Spring's companies of the 55th/53rd forward. He gave them their orders orally. He knew little of the Japanese dispositions and so these orders were simple: "55/53 Bn will attack enemy positions astride the road." He suspected that three machine-gun posts were sited near a "big white tree" which lay ahead of him and just to the right of the track. He told Reid, therefore, to go forward on a bearing of 20 degrees, clean out the positions to the right of and behind the "big white tree " and then exploit along the track. Spring was to follow the same bearing until he reached the track, cross, and range through the Japanese positions on the left of the track.

# 7 December - Sanananda

- At 3.15 p.m. the two companies moved ahead through hampering undergrowth. Soon they were in the thick of fire from cleverly concealed positions. The heavy growth and their own inexperience caused them to bunch in little groups which made them good targets. Sharpshooters picked them off.
- Spring's men became confused and yawed to the right, where a number of them came up with what remained of Captain Thorn's company of the 49th. As a result only one section instead of the whole company crossed the track, and these few were held on the other side.
- This failure apparently laid Reid's men bare to fire which held them in scorching enfilade and struck many of them down, including Reid himself.
- To relieve the situation Lovell then ordered Gilleland to send his men diagonally across the road towards the white tree, from the position they had previously acquired well to the left of the track and in which Lieutenant Haan and some fifty Americans had relieved them about 4.15 p.m.
- With night coming on the men of the 55th/53rd began to consolidate their slight advance approximately 100 yards in front of their morning positions.
- Their attack, like that of the 49th, had failed, and the cost was heavy. At the end of the day 8 officers and 122 men were listed as killed, wounded or missing including 28 N.C.O.s.
- The 49th had lost 229 men killed wounded or missing, nearly 48% of the battalion.

## 7 Dec – Sanananda

- A further attempt to break through to the block early that morning was a failure, and the supply party returned in the evening with its supplies undelivered. The Japanese were blocking the trail, in strength, the men reported, and they had not been able to get through.
- The Australians now embarked on "a policy of patrolling and edging forward wherever possible,"



# 7 December - Gona

- The 7th was a comparatively quiet day. Brigadier Dougherty had arranged air attacks as a preliminary to another assault by the 39th.
- These proved disappointing, however, falling on the Australian rear areas and not near the Japanese.
- Honner (not prepared to send his men against an unshocked and alerted enemy) at once cancelled the ground program and Dougherty approved his action.



Brigadier Ivan Dougherty, Commander 21st Brigade (centre), with Major L. E. Walcott and Captain H. M. Hamilton (right).

## 7 December - Air

- Blamey, wrote to the Chief of the General Staff (Northcott) on 7th December:
- “The bulk of our supply has to be taken in by aeroplane and landed on landing grounds that are not very good and sometimes are out of action on account of weather conditions.
- And while we have air superiority we are unable to utilise it to the full because, as yet, we cannot get strips strong enough to take fighter aircraft. The consequences are that as soon as our protective umbrella returns [to Moresby], the news is flashed from Buna to Lae and the enemy comes out on bombing and strafing expeditions.”



# 7 December - Air

- Six B-25s and four Beaufighters bombed and strafed Buna mission. One Beaufighter subsequently crash landed.
- One B17 attacks wrecked vessel off Gona and four B-17's attack a tanker off Gasmata. The attacks on shipping were unsuccessful but direct hits were claimed on the runway. About ten enemy fighters made occasional attacks on the bombers but mostly kept out of range.
- Three enemy dive bombers and six fighters unsuccessfully attacked the airfield at Dobodura.
- Three enemy dive bombers, three fighters and eighteen high level bombers attacked a field hospital, causing thirty casualties.
- In four separate engagements between a total of 33 US fighters and 46 Japanese fighters and 43 bombers, ten Japanese bombers and 5 fighters were shot down. No US planes were lost.

# 7 December - Air

- On 26th November, No. 4 Squadron had sent two detached flights to the other side of the Owen Stanleys. One of these was based at Dobodura and the other at Popondetta for cooperation with the guns.
- The Wirraway's low speed and the fact that it carried an observer behind the pilot made it suitable for army cooperation.
- Primarily the Wirraway crews' operations were concerned with tactical reconnaissance but they soon became recognised for their versatility and, their aircraft being the only ones based in the actual battle area, were very quickly in demand for a variety of combat tasks.



*(Australian War Memorial)*

An R.A.A.F. Wirraway comes in at tree-top level to machine-gun Japanese positions at Gona.

# 7 December - Air

- On 7th December, each of eight Wirraways dropped two 250-lb bombs on Japanese troop concentrations near Gona Mission.
- Vulnerable as they were to enemy anti-aircraft fire the crews flew low on most operations since good observation of ground targets was the key to their success.
- This also made them less conspicuous from the air, so affording them some protection against marauding Zeros.

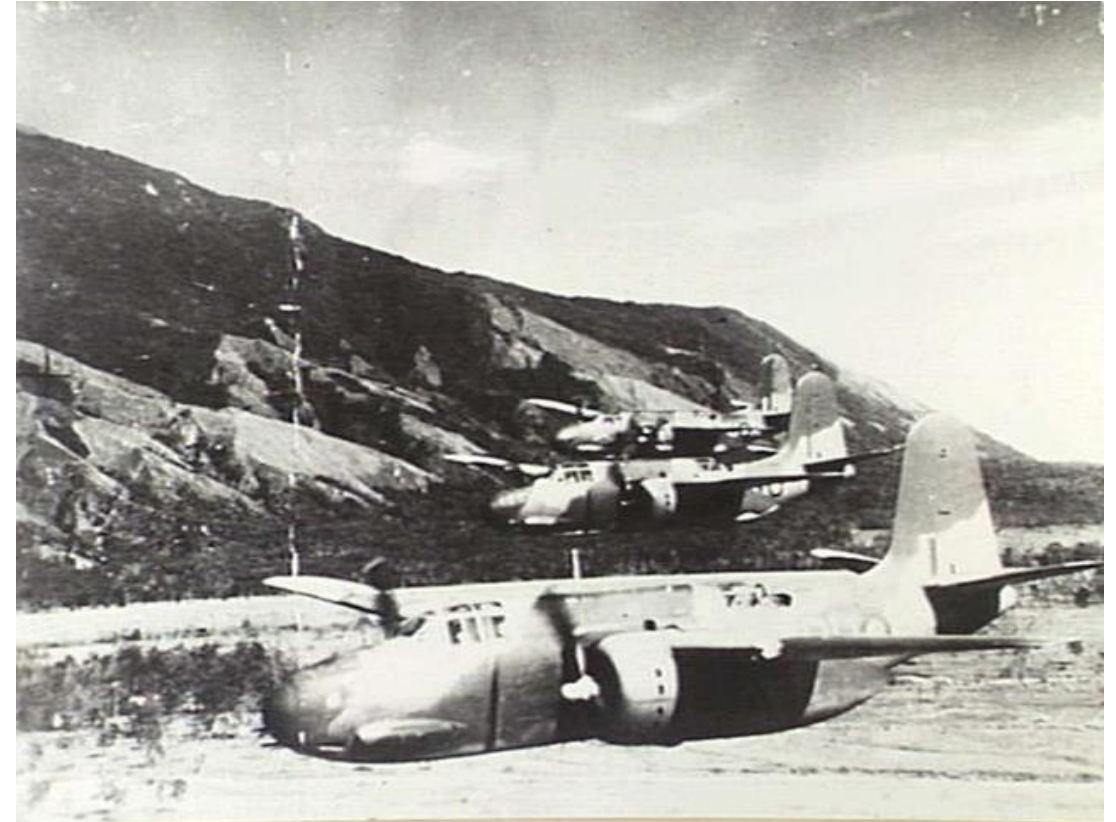


*(Australian War Memorial)*

Allied aircraft bomb Japanese positions in bush near Gona.

# 7 December - Air

- Six Beaufighters and five R.A.A.F. Bostons made low-level sweeps over the Lae aerodrome on 7th December, the crews found it difficult to distinguish undamaged enemy aircraft on the ground because of the amount of wreckage that littered the target area.
- Enemy troops were strafed in these attacks, which the Japanese resisted with heavy anti-aircraft fire.
- Only one Australian aircraft was hit, a Boston piloted by Flying Officer Wines who was still able to bring it back to base and make a crash-landing without casualties.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

AC0033

DOUGLAS BOSTON AIRCRAFT OF NO. 22 SQUADRON  
RAAF, IN NEW GUINEA AREA.

# 8 December - Government

- Curtin drew on Blamey's report, except those passages referring to the Americans, for composing further messages to Churchill and Roosevelt, sent on 8<sup>th</sup> December, drawing attention to the great difficulties of the South-West Pacific Area.
- He pressed again for the return of the 9th Division as early as possible and asked only that certain minimum requirements necessary to ensure its effective employment in the South-West Pacific be sent with it. The remainder of the equipment including most of its vehicles and its artillery should be left in the Middle East.
- The report by the Chiefs of Staff on the forces required to defend Australia was considered by the War Cabinet on 8th December, when its conclusions were simply "noted".



# 8 December - Government

- The Chiefs of Staff pointedly distinguished between the actual situation in the Pacific and "the situation envisaged by the War Cabinet".
- They compared the Allied and the Japanese forces in the South-West and South Pacific Areas and reached the conclusion that before an invasion of Australia by the Japanese would become likely it would be necessary for Japan to achieve a decisive naval victory, to recapture those parts of the Solomon Islands at present occupied by United States forces, to capture New Caledonia and the New Hebrides, and possibly to capture New Guinea.
- The least forces for an attempted invasion of Australia would be three to four divisions, with equipment, together with one month's stores and such a force would require up to 40 or 50 ships. The assembly of such a force would presumably take place in the New Guinea-Solomons area, and Allied air reconnaissance would be likely to detect such a concentration of shipping and provide warning of its movements.
- The assembly would probably take place partly at Rabaul and partly in the Solomons. The passage from Rabaul to, say, the Brisbane area at a speed of twelve knots would take five or six days and the position and course of the convoy should be known to the Allied forces throughout the passage and there should be a reasonable indication of the threatened area about 36 to 48 hours before the actual attack.

## 8 December - Government

- Notwithstanding a major naval defeat, it would be possible for the United Nations to dispose light forces including submarines in sufficient strength to be able to intercept and attack the enemy's invasion force by day and night. It would also be possible to concentrate land-based aircraft in considerable strength in time to make a series of attacks on the enemy forces during their approach and disembarkation. Such a force would have to accept considerable risks and would suffer severe losses during the approach to our coast and the subsequent disembarkation, both from air and naval attack.
- The conclusion was that Allied forces should continue to carry out offensive operations with limited objectives, to clear the enemy out of bases from which he could launch attacks against Australia and interfere with Allied lines of communication.
- As for "the situation envisaged by the War Cabinet", the Chiefs of Staff described their task as the examination of "what is possible rather than what we consider likely". Assuming that the enemy could invade Australia at any point and that it was necessary to hold forces on the mainland in strengths adequate to resist invasion in any area likely to be attacked, they repeated the old estimate of an army of 25 divisions and an air force of 71 squadrons.



# 8 December - Sea

- Timor Sea
  - The Catalina found the rafts in the afternoon of the 8th, in a position seven miles N.N.E. of the earlier sighting.
  - By this time the occupants of the raft had dwindled to "20 at the most".
  - The flying boat was unable to alight because of the state of the sea, and Pope ordered Vigilant to the position.
  - In addition to sighting the rafts the Catalina, on its return flight to Darwin, sighted the whaler —then about 150 miles north-west of Darwin and approximately the same distance south of the rafts. Pope again sent Kalgoorlie to the position.
  - Makassar Strait
  - The ship Heinan Maru was torpedoed and sunk at 00-52N, 118-54E by submarine USS Gar on 8 December.
- Map

## 8 Dec - Guadalcanal

- The third infantry regiment of General Patch's division the 132d Regimental Combat Team (less 1st Battalion and Battery A, 247th Field Artillery Battalion) arrived on 8 December.
- Photo: Americal Division commander, Major General Alexander M. Patch, Jr., watches while his troops and supplies are staged on Guadalcanal's beaches on 8 December 1942.



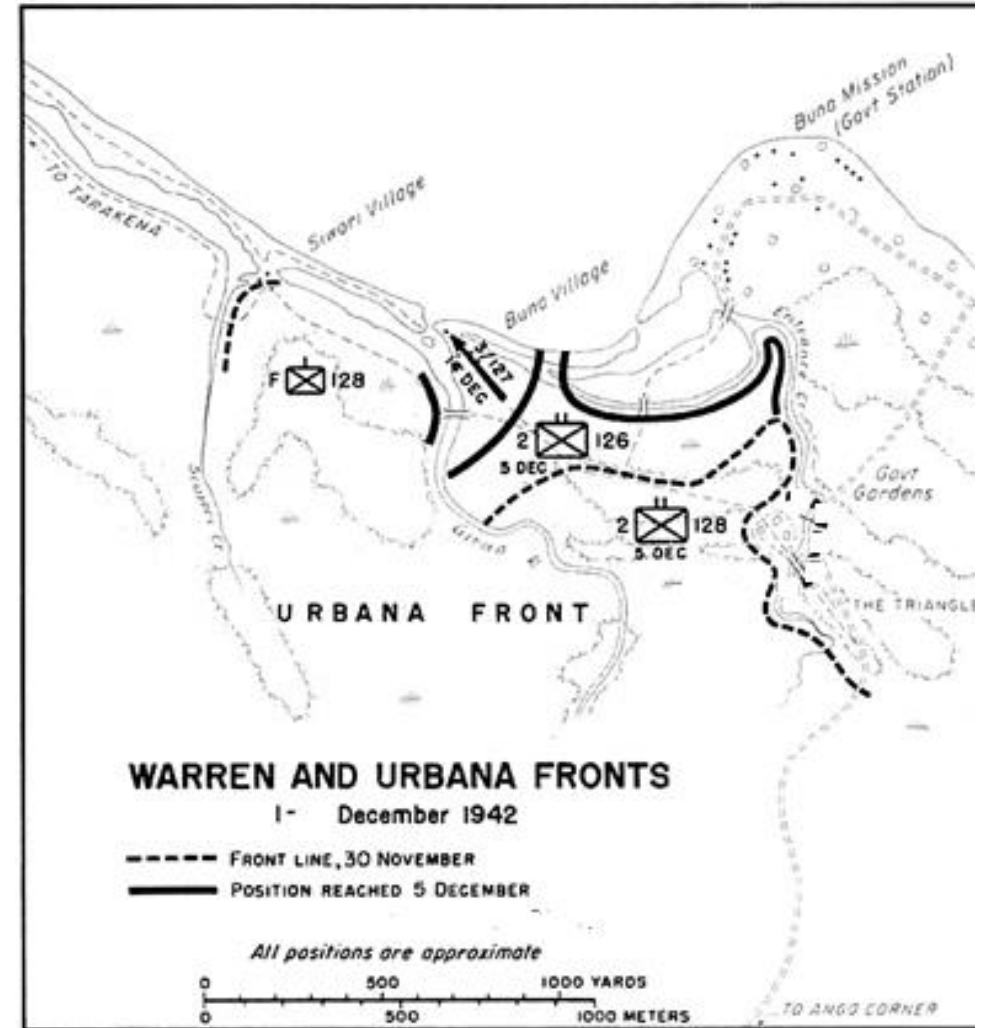
## 8 December – Buna E

- Colonel Martin wanted to move up a few of the artillery pieces for direct fire on the bunkers, but Warren Force had too few guns on hand to risk any of them so far forward.
- The arrival by sea on 8 December of two more 25-pounders then made it possible to shift the pieces.
- The two 25-pounders were emplaced just north of Hariko, and
- the O'Hare Troop (the three 3.7-inch howitzers of the 1st Australian Mountain Battery at Hariko) took up a new position about one mile below the bridge between the strips.



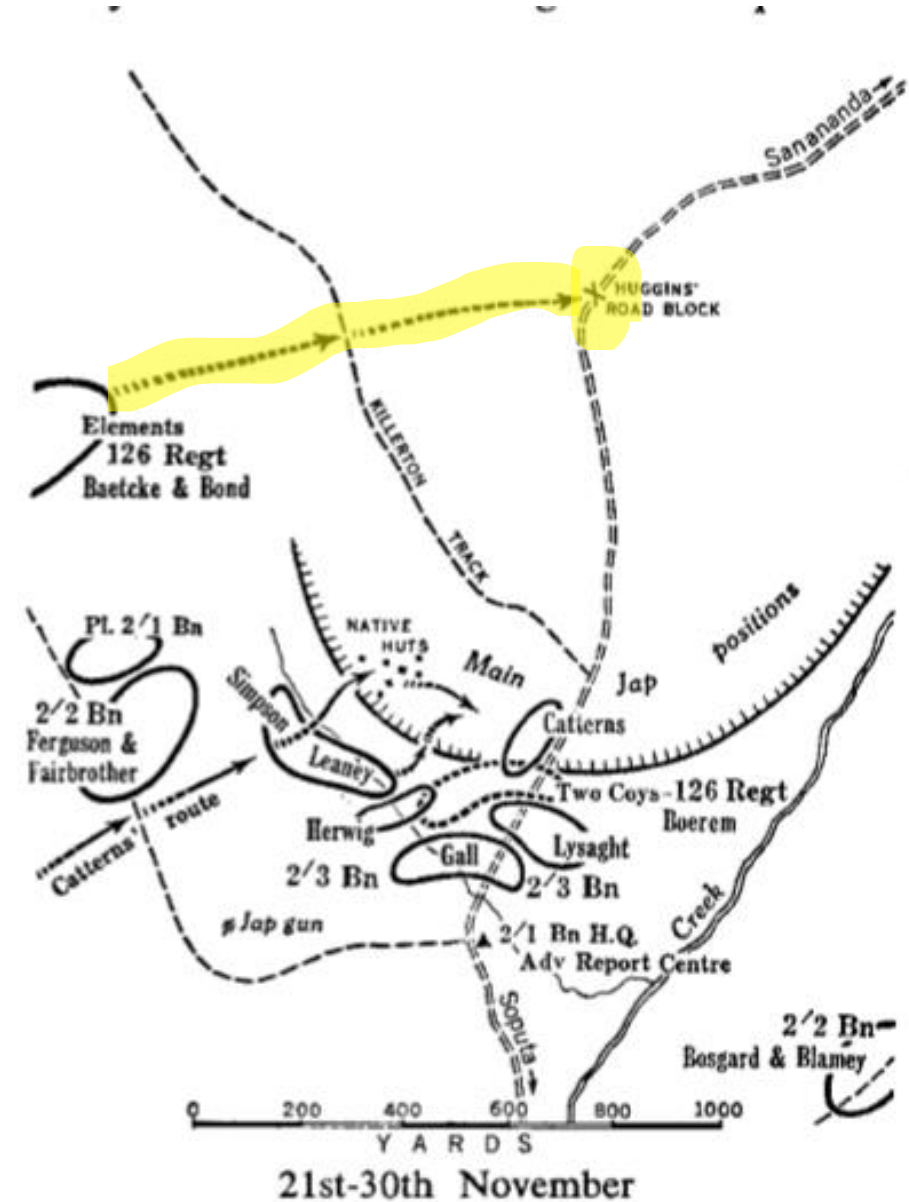
# 8 December – Buna W

- On 8 December the artillery and mortars opened up at 1400, and the troops moved forward at 1415. Mortars laid down fire only fifty yards from the advancing infantry, but the Japanese line held, and the attack was beaten off once again.
- Two primitive flame throwers had reached the front that day, and one of them was immediately pressed into use. A main Japanese bunker on the southern edge of the village had resisted capture for several days. On the corner of a kunai flat with dense jungle and swamp to the rear it could neither be taken by frontal assault nor flanked.
- Covered by the fire of twenty men, the operator managed to get within thirty feet of the enemy without being detected. When he stepped into the open and turned on his machine all that came out was a ten or fifteen foot dribble of flame which set the grass on fire but didn't reach the bunker. The operator, two of the men covering him and the chemical officer in charge, were killed.
- In the evening the Japanese in the village counterattacked on the left with about forty men and a second force of seventy-five to a hundred men moved from the mission by way of the island and hit the right flank of the 2d Battalion, 126th Infantry. The force from the mission advanced to the attack screaming and yelling, but the battalion's mortars and machine guns beat it off in short order.



# 8 December—Sanananda

- Lieutenant Dal Ponte volunteered to take the supplies through. Taking command of the same force that had failed to get through the day before, he moved out early the next morning. About 300 yards from the roadblock, at nearly the same spot where the Japanese had held up Dal Ponte three days before, the supply party was halted and pinned down by machine gun fire from hidden enemy positions on either side of the trail.
- Dal Ponte knew what to do. Deliberately exposing himself to draw fire, he located first one enemy position and then the other and personally led infiltrating parties which either silenced the enemy or caused him to withdraw.
- Though repeatedly attacked the rest of the way, the supply party successfully fought its way into the roadblock and Dal Ponte immediately took command of the garrison. Huggins, who had been carrying on despite his wounds, was evacuated to the rear that night when the supply party returned to the position held by Company K to the west of the block.

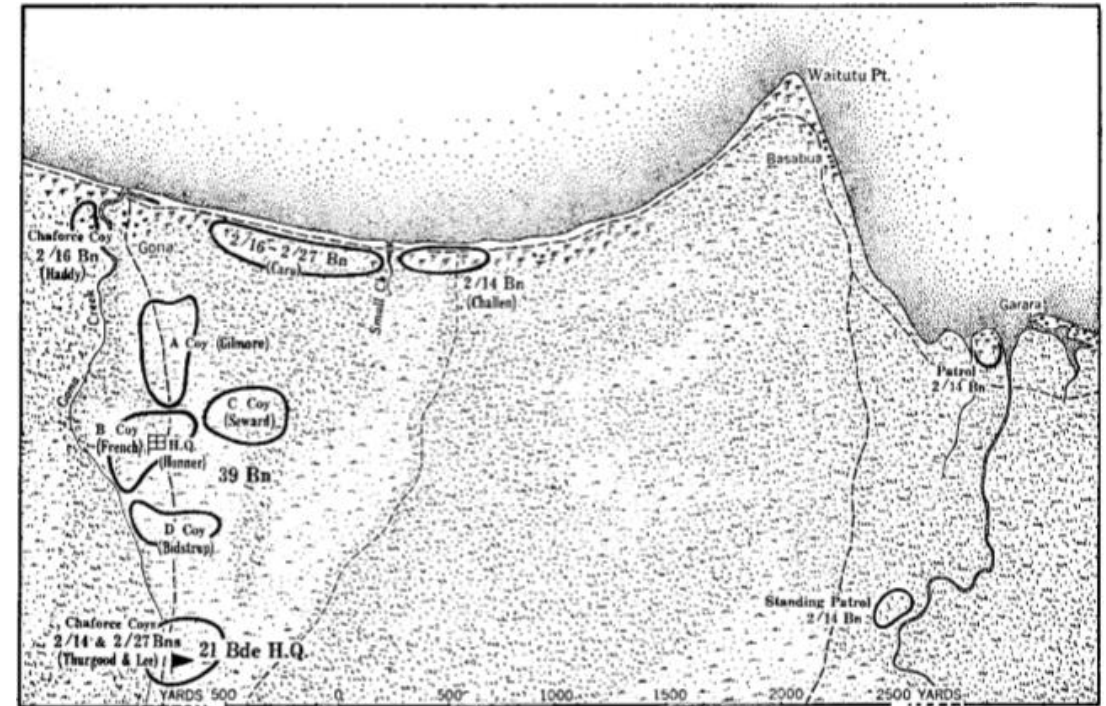


# 8 December– Sanananda

- Captain Huggins gave a discouraging report on conditions in the roadblock. He described it as about 200 yards square, with the command post and aid station near the center, "all in elliptical pattern." Fevers were raging, he said, and food, ammunition, and medical supplies were running low. The men had to live in holes, and the disposal of wastes presented a difficult problem. Of the 225 men left in the garrison, he thought that perhaps 125 were in condition to fight.
- As Dal Ponte was to recall the matter:
- . . . water was procured from a hole dug about 3 feet deep, . . . chlorinated for drinking by administering individual tablets. Another source of water supply was that which the men would catch in their pouches from the downpour during the previous night. . . . The disposal of wastes and the burying of dead had to be accomplished within [the] area. . . . Rations were very meager because the ration parties concentrated on ammunition. . . . Chocolate bars, bully beef, and instant coffee were the main items of food when provided. . . . The weather was almost without [exception] rain at night and boiling hot sun during the day. . . .

## 8 December– Gona

- At 11 .30 a.m. on 8th December Australian mortars and field guns began ranging. An hour later fifteen minutes of concentrated fire began, the gunners using delayed fuses so that the shells burst about two feet underground, actually boring into the dug-in positions with deadly effect.
- At 12.45 the 39th Battalion attacked, Captain Gilmore's company on the right of the track, Captain Seward's on the left. Anxious to come to grips Gilmore's men followed the barrage so closely that they were among the defenders before it had ended and while these were still reeling.



Dispositions, 6 p.m. 4th December

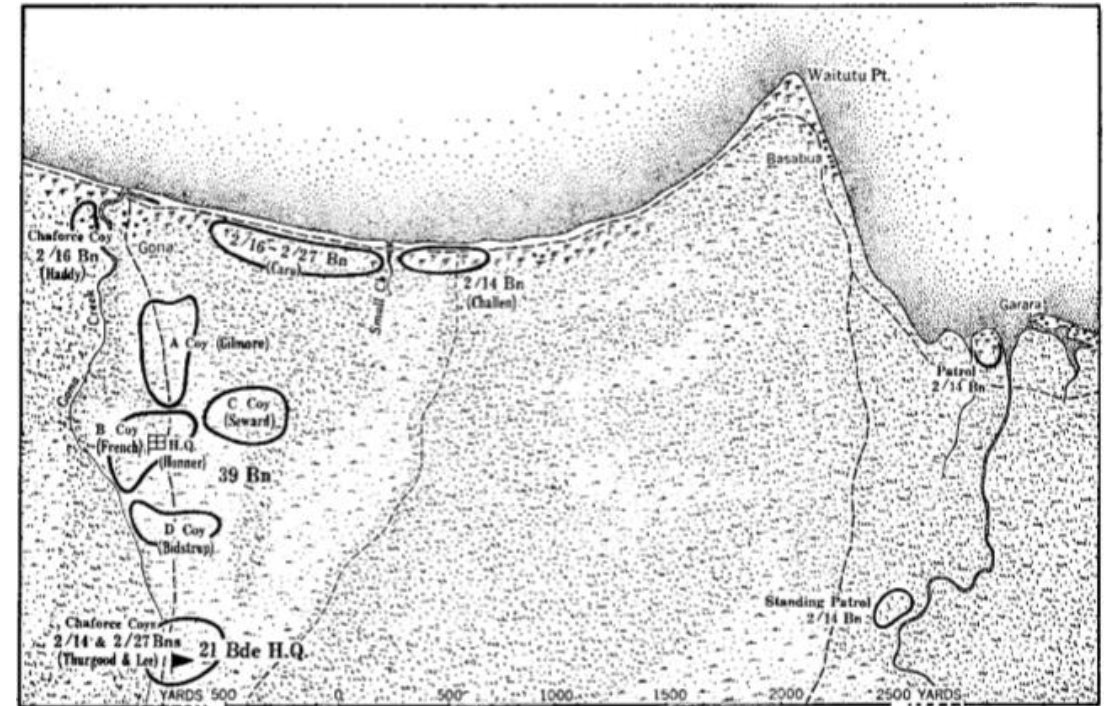


## 8 December– Gona

- On the company's right Lieutenant Kelly's platoon lost men but smashed into the mission area itself.
- Private Wilkinson moved into the open, set up his Bren gun on a post about four feet high and, standing in full view of the Japanese, raked them with his fire.
- On the left of the company Lieutenant Dalby raced his men to the first post and was reported to have struck down the gunner manning a medium machine-gun and seven other defenders. Hard on his heels his men clawed out the remaining defenders of this big post, capturing a medium and three light machine-guns.
- Then Corporal Ellis ranged hotly ahead and his fellows credited him with wiping out the next four posts single-handed.
- On the left of the track Seward's company had been less fortunate. They were badly cut about by fire from the positions Captain Bidstrup's men had encountered on the 6th. Honner pulled out the survivors and left Lieutenant French's company to maintain the front there.
- He then, as the afternoon advanced, sent Bidstrup's and Seward's men through the breach that Gilmore's men had made. They fought on through the afternoon and into the night until half the perimeter defences and the centre of the garrison area were in their hands.

# 8 December– Gona

- Near the shore Major Sublet, who had taken over command of the composite battalion, thrust his 2/27th component along the beach and Captain Atkinson (with the company which Major Robinson had previously commanded) north-west from his command post. But they did not get far through the storm of machine-gun fire which beset them.
- By evening the militia and the AIF had a pincers on the mission, and only a small corridor 200 yards wide separated them.
- Many of the Japanese tried to make their way by stealth to Giruwa that night. The attempt failed, and the Japanese were cut down in the darkness by the Bren guns of the Australians.



Dispositions, 6 p.m. 4th December

# 8 December - Air

- Gasmata was attacked by a patrol bomber on the night of 7/8. Large explosion near NW end of runway.
- Four A-20's and eight B-25's pound AA positions at Buna and area around Buna Mission and Cape Endaiadere as ground forces attack bunker positions on S edge of Buna. One A20 and four B25s damaged by AA.
- Five P-38's hit wrecked vessel off Gona.
- Six B24's bomb Gasmata A/F. –
- 6 destroyers carrying troops to reinforce Buna-Gona beachhead are attacked three times, first by a lone B-24 then by four B-17s then by seven B17s, and and turn back to Rabaul. Hits were reported on two of the destroyers. Seven out of thirty intercepting fighters were claimed shot down.
- During this period aircraft flew an average of more than 100 patients daily out of Dobodura to Moresby, achieving a peak of 280 patients on 8 December.
- Reconnaissance of the Buka airfield revealed fourteen fighters and six medium bombers, the runway was being resurfaced.
- Attempted bombing mission of Attu and Kiska by 6 B-24's and 6 B-26's, escorted by 8 P-38's, is forced back by weather.