

The War in the Pacific 3 From Lae to Tokyo Bay

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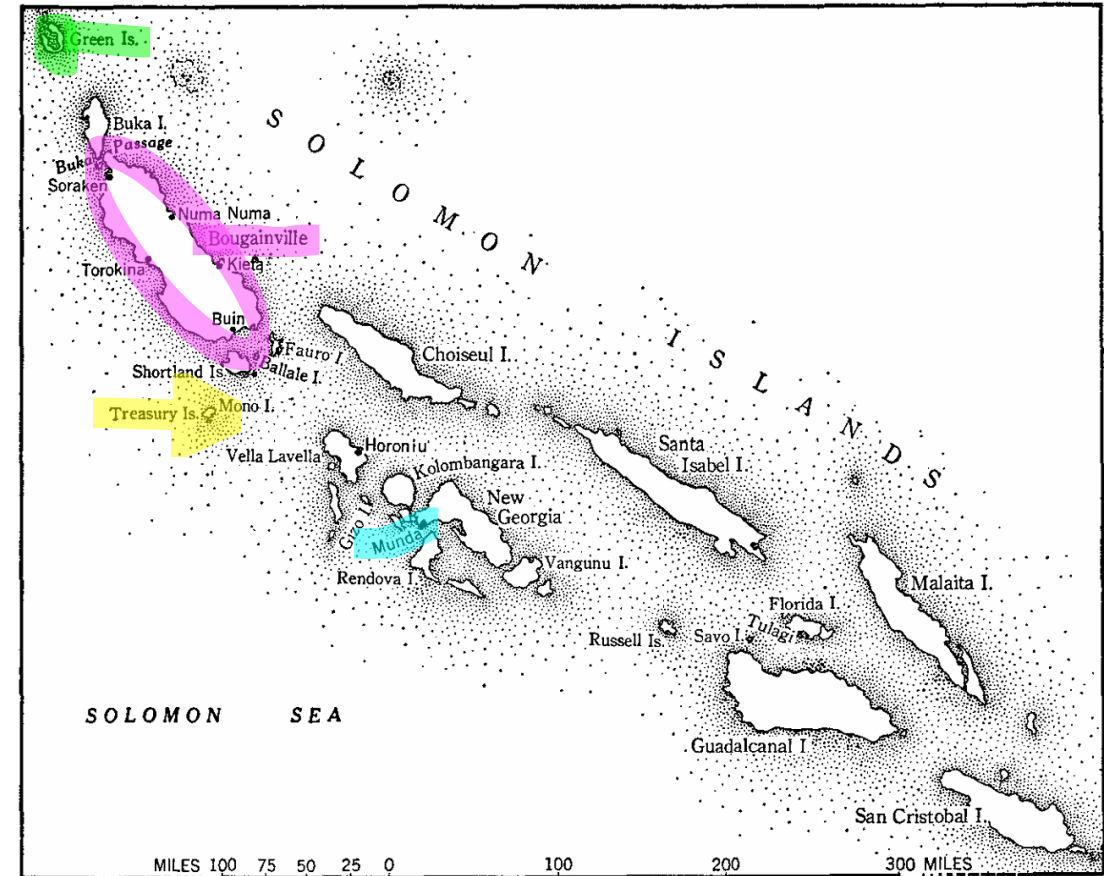
Kamikazes

October & November 44



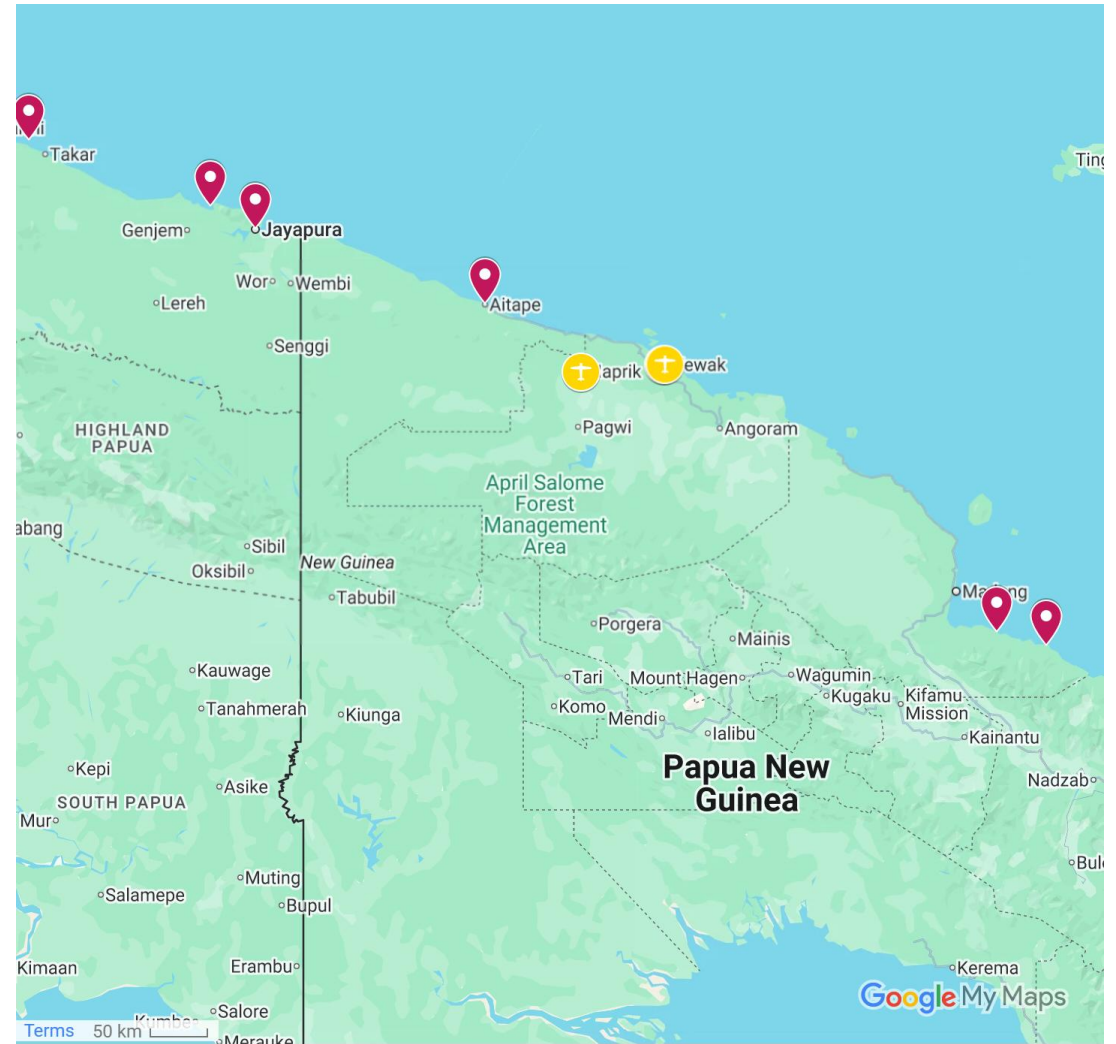
October 1944 - Bougainville

- The task of II Corps was to defend the air and naval installations on Emirau, Green and Treasury Islands and Munda and, on Bougainville, to "destroy enemy resistance as opportunity offers".



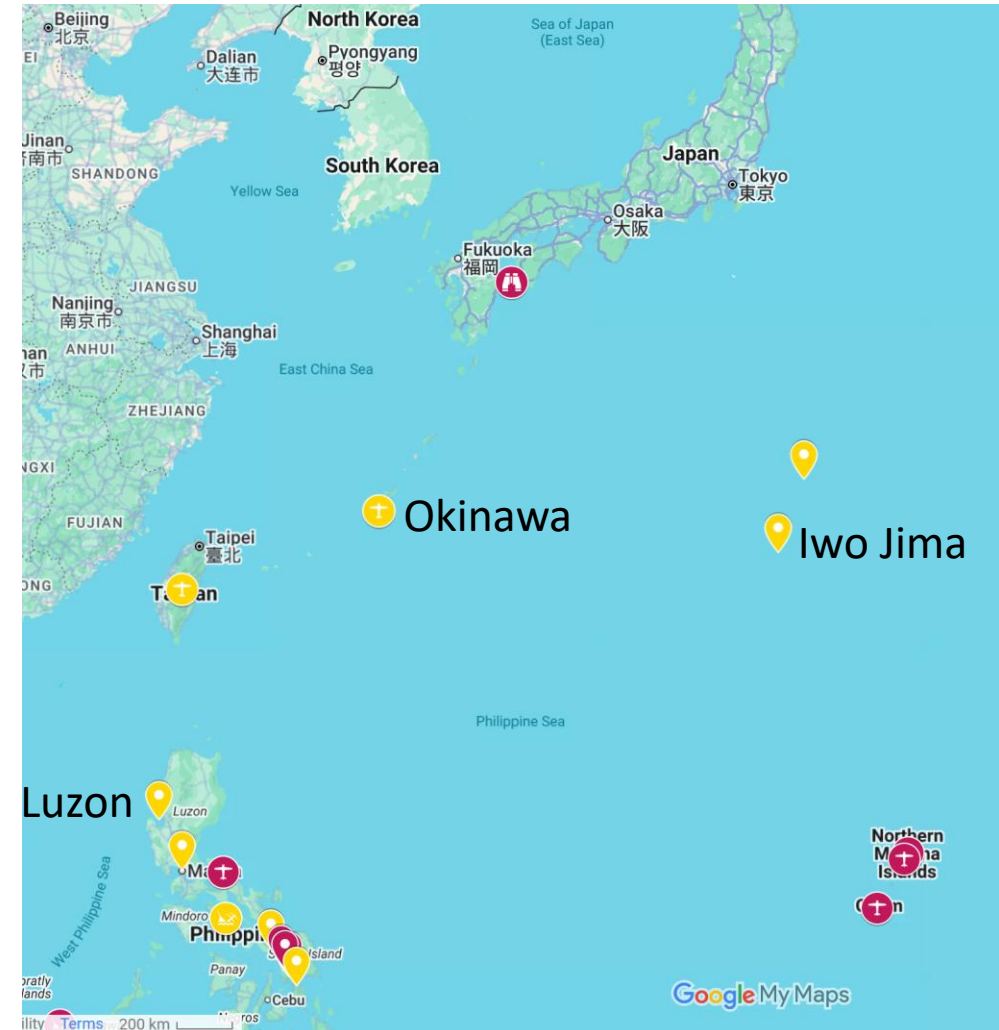
October 1944 – New Guinea

- At Aitape the 6th Division (which might be needed later in the Philippines) was to "defend the airstrip and base area and by patrol activity maintain contact with the enemy in the Wewak area.



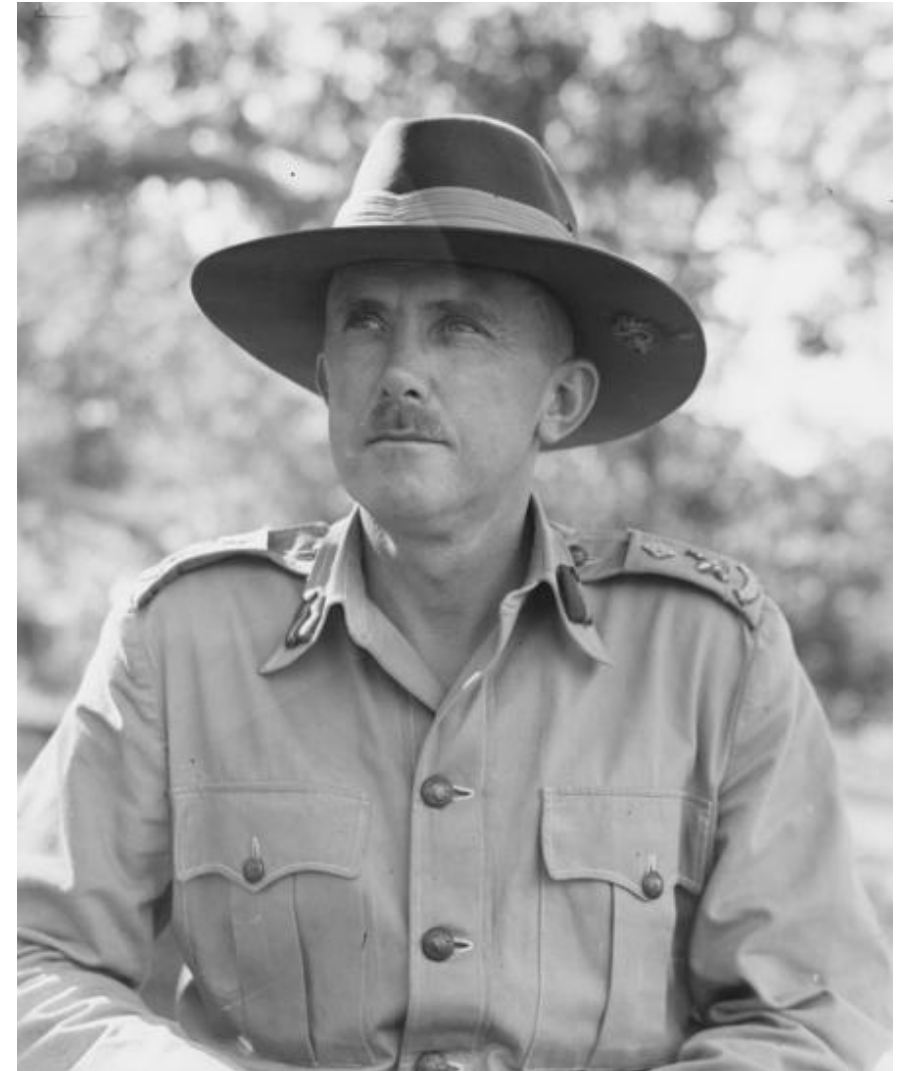
5 October 1944 - Pacific

- On 2nd October because of the lack of sufficient troops to attack Formosa and because the army could not make such troops available until the end of the war in Europe, Admiral King proposed to the Joint Chiefs that, operations against Luzon, Iwo Jima (in the Bonins) and the Ryukyus should precede any attack on Formosa.
- Next day the Joint Chiefs directed MacArthur to invade Luzon on 20th December and Nimitz to seize one or more positions in the Ryukyus by 1st March 1945.
- On the 5th Nimitz informed his subordinates that his forces would seize Iwo Jima on 20th January and positions in the Ryukyus on 1st March.
- From bases in Luzon air and naval forces could neutralise the Japanese in Formosa.
- From Iwo Jima fighter support could be given to B-29's attacking the Japanese mainland.
- The capture of Okinawa in the Ryukyus would bring American forces within 300 miles of Kyushu, the southernmost of the Japanese islands.



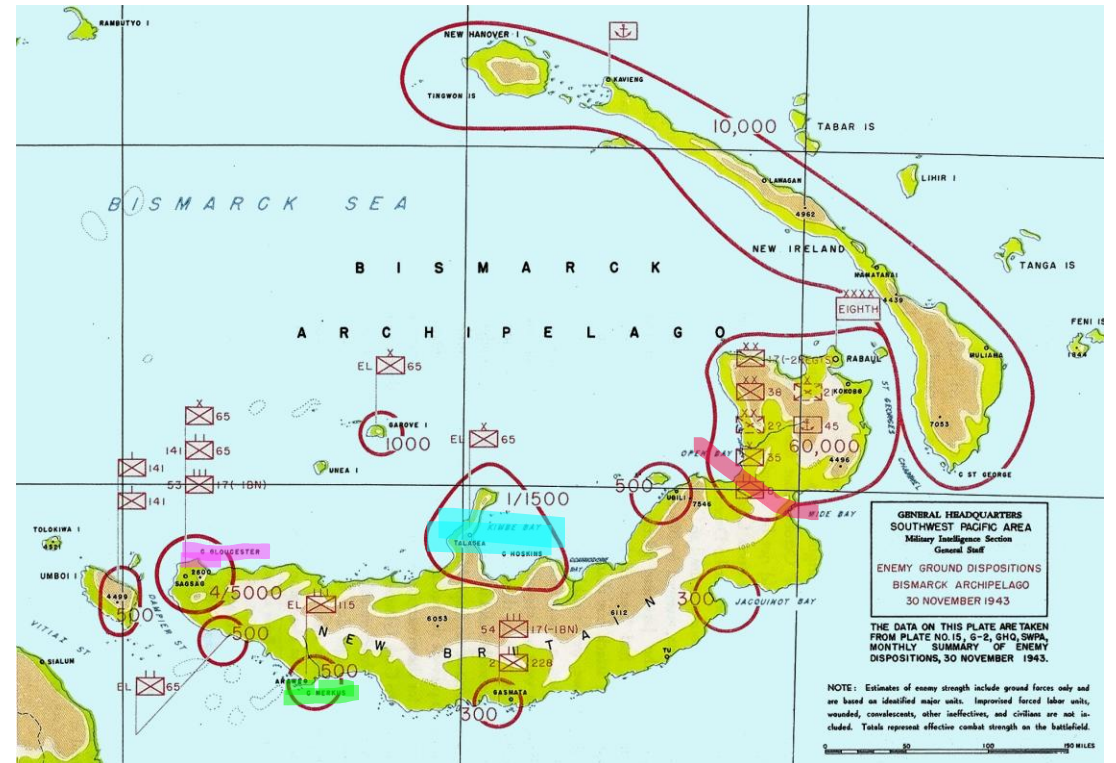
7 October 1944 – SW Pacific

- It was becoming evident to those Australians who were close to G.H.Q. that G.H.Q. would prefer not to have Australians playing any notable part in the reconquest of the Philippines.
- On 7th October Berryman, then commanding Forward Echelon LHQ at Hollandia, recorded in his diary that MacArthur's Chief of Staff, General Sutherland, had informed Blamey that it was not politically expedient for the A.I.F. to be amongst the first troops into the Philippines.
- Photo: PORT MORESBY, PAPUA, 1944-03-13. MAJOR-GENERAL F.H. BERRYMAN, GOC 2ND AUSTRALIAN CORPS.



8 October 1944 – New Britain

- The task on New Britain would be to "maintain contact with the Japanese by patrol activity and, without commitment of major forces, endeavour to advance to a line **Open Bay-Wide Bay**".
- The 5th Division, commanded by Major General Alan Ramsay, was chosen for this operation, having concentrated around Madang in May 1944 following operations to secure the Huon Peninsula.
- Japanese were mainly located in the Gazelle Peninsula in the north around Rabaul, with watching-stations established as far forward as Awul. Due to the garrison's increasing isolation many were involved in growing rice and gardening.
- With American enclaves at **Talasea–Cape Hoskins**, **Arawe** and **Cape Gloucester**, the two sides were geographically separated and observing a tacit truce.
- In early October 1944, the 36th Infantry Battalion was landed at Cape Hoskins to begin taking over from the US garrison.



20 October 1944 - Bougainville

- The Intelligence staff of XIV American Corps had estimated the strength of the Japanese forces on Bougainville at 12,000.
- In October the Australian Intelligence staff at L.H.Q. focussed on the strength of the Japanese there, and on 11th October produced an estimate of 25,000.
- This difference, one of a series that had occurred between the Australian Intelligence staff and General Willoughby (photo), the head of the American Intelligence staff, led to some sharp exchanges.
- On 20th October Willoughby wrote to the Australian Director of Military Intelligence, Brigadier Rogers, in protest. Several discrepancies (he wrote) are readily noted in the figures.



20 October 1944 - Bougainville

- In view of the fact that this Section represents the opinion of GHQ, SWPA, the sudden dissemination of this increased strength for Bougainville is suggesting an open discrepancy which is undesirable.
- Discrepancies were generally noted in Washington and London and explanations requested; it was simple to adjust locally. I suggest that this matter be discreetly adjusted in later editions.
- Rogers then wrote and quoted five instances in which an Australian estimate had varied greatly from G.H.Q.'s and had been proved more nearly correct.
- On 13th November, however, Blamey directed that for publication throughout the Intelligence network the G.H.Q. estimate must be accepted as the official estimate, but where Rogers' staff produced a differing estimate he should inform Blamey.



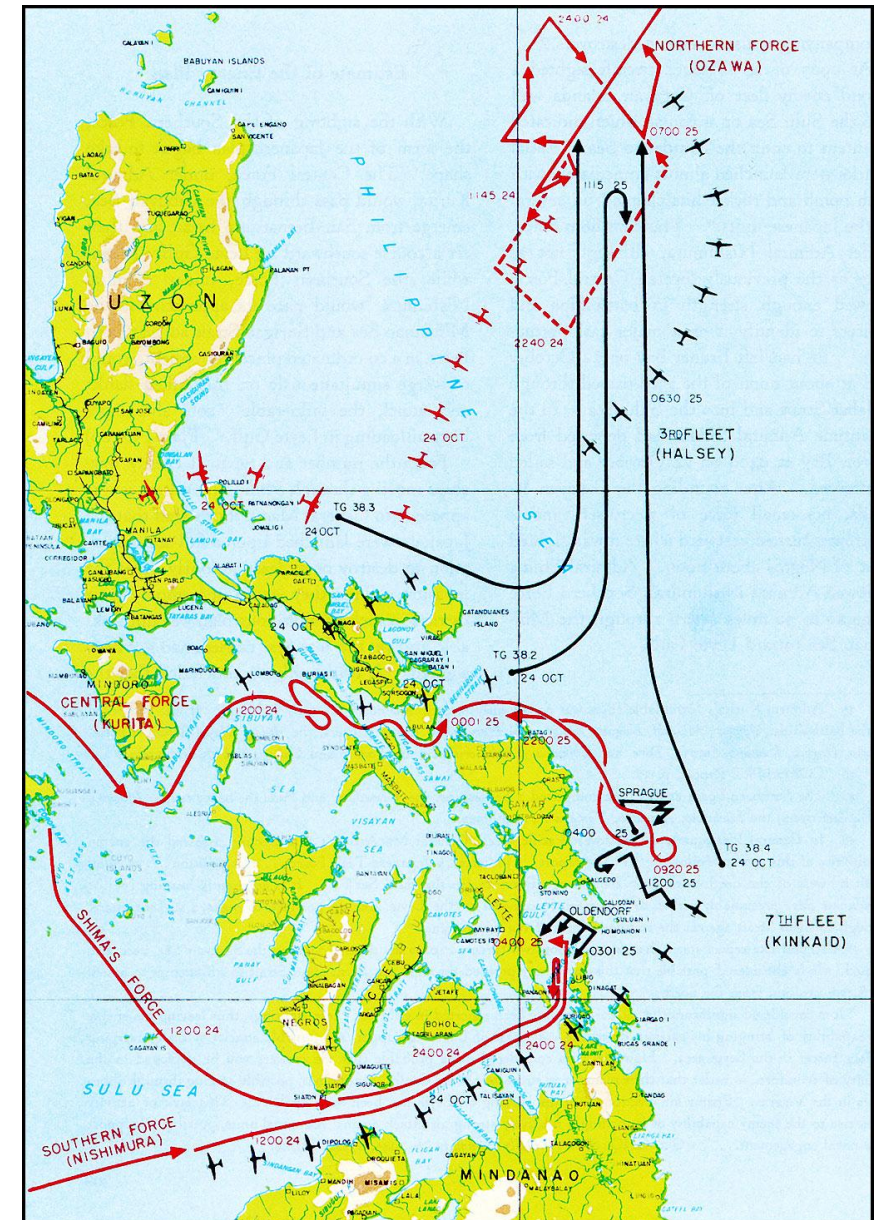
AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

1167

THE JAPANESE SINGAPORE SURRENDER PARTY BEING
LED AWAY INTO CAPTIVITY BY BRIGADIER J. D.
ROGERS, COMMANDER AUSTRALIAN MISSION, SEAC,
AFTER THE SURRENDER CEREMONY.

24/5 October 1944 - Leyte

- 10.30 –15.35 24/10 3rd Fleets Air Groups attack the Japanese Center Force, sinking Musashi and putting Myoko out of the battle.
- 16.40 24/10 Aircraft find the Northern Force of Japanese carriers and Halsey turns north with the whole of the 3rd Fleet.
- 03.00 - 04.00 25/10 Admiral Oldendorf's Task Force 77 destroys Japanese Southern Force.
- 06.37 25/10 Centre Force opens fire on Taffy 3.
- 07.10 – Evening 25/10 TF 38 finds and destroys the Northern Force carriers
- 09.50 25/10 Kurita turns Center Force away to the North.
- The signals from 7th Fleet had come in at random and out of order because of a backlog in the signals office.
- 11.15 Halsey turns his Battle ships around.
- What was Oldendorf doing after 04.00 and particularly after 06.37?
- Was there still a need for Halsey to turn TF34 south at 11.15?
- Why didn't Kinkaid know there was nothing in San Bernadino?
- What were the Black Cats doing?



25 October 1944 - Leyte

- From 3,000 mi away in Pearl Harbor, Admiral Nimitz had been monitoring the desperate calls from Taffy 3, and sent Halsey a terse message:
- TURKEY TROTS TO WATER GG FROM CINCPAC ACTION COM
THIRD FLEET INFO COMINCH CTF SEVENTY-SEVEN X WHERE IS
RPT WHERE IS TASK FORCE THIRTY FOUR RR THE WORLD
WONDERS
- The first four words and the last three were "padding" used to confuse enemy cryptanalysis (the beginning and end of the true message were marked by double consonants).
- The communications staff on Halsey's flagship correctly deleted the first section of padding but mistakenly retained the last three words in the message finally handed to Halsey.
- Halsey, when reading the message, thought that the last words—"THE WORLD WONDERS"—were a biting piece of criticism from Nimitz and threw his cap to the deck and broke into "sobs of rage".
- Rear Admiral Robert Carney, his chief of staff, confronted him, telling Halsey "Stop it! What the hell's the matter with you? Pull yourself together."
- At 11.15 more than three hours after the first distress messages from Seventh Fleet had been received by his flagship, Halsey ordered TF 34 to turn around and head southwards towards Samar. Two and a half hours were then spent refuelling TF 34's accompanying destroyers.

Jerry McBrien 2026



Situation Report 25 October 1944

- The Japanese carrier force has been destroyed at the battles of the Philippine Sea and Leyte Gulf. American airforces have a significant qualitative as well as a quantitative advantage over the Japanese.
- The overall effectiveness of B29 operations from India & China is disappointing, due to intolerable logistics, unfavorable weather, and teething problems with a new and complex airplane.
- The first runway on Saipan was complete by 19 October and the 73rd Bombardment Wing began arriving on 12 October.
- The first concept for a plutonium bomb, the gun type “Thin Man” had turned out to be impractical when the first plutonium production became available. An accelerated effort on the alternative more complex implosion concept, codenamed Fat Man, began in August 1944.
- When the first Plutonium production reactor at Hanford was started up an unexpected problem with Xenon was only overcome because of an unauthorised piece of overdesign by DuPont.
- The pilot Plutonium plant initially only achieved 40% efficiency.
- To date leaks have limited production and forced shutdowns of the thermal diffusion plant for enriching uranium.
- The American 6th Army is ashore on Leyte and have captured an airfield but Leyte is a small island by Philippine standards and there were very few Japanese there.

Situation Report 25 October 1944

- Despite the dominance of the American Navy and Air Force, Japanese ground troops continue to inflict terrifying levels of casualties on American invasion forces. On Peleliu The Japanese inflicted 70% casualties on Puller's 1st Marine Regiment, or 1,749 men before their relief. The 7th Marines had suffered 46% casualties before being relieved. The 322nd RCT on Angaur sustained a 47% casualty rate. These were two tiny islands. Casualty estimates for invasion of the Japanese home islands started at a million.
- The Joint Chiefs have directed MacArthur to invade Luzon on 20th December and Nimitz to seize one or more positions in the Ryukyus by 1st March 1945.
- The 5th and 13th US airforces and RAAF Command's First Tactical Airforce and North Western Area are attempting to suppress all Japanese air bases which could influence the land battle in the Philippines.
- McArthur's Advanced GHQ has moved from Port Moresby to Hollandia in Dutch New Guinea.
- The US Navy's Seabees are building a huge naval base at Ulithi.
- General Sturdee's First Army headquarters at Lae will command Australian forces taking over from the Americans on Bougainville, New Britain and on the main Island of New Guinea.
- On 18th October Blamey issued to Sturdee an operation instruction which defined the role of the First Army in the Bougainville, New Britain and Aitape areas as "by offensive action to destroy enemy resistance as opportunity offers without committing major forces".

25 October 1944 - Leyte

- Just after the Japanese battleships had broken off the action and turned away the fighter direction teams in the American flotilla were busy recovering aircraft with many friendly aircraft cluttering the skies around them.
- At 0740 a bomb laden Zero crashed into the escort carrier Santee's flight deck, and the bomb exploded in the hangar deck, starting fires.
- In less than a minute, another Zero went into the water just short of the escort carrier Petrof Bay, and the small carrier Sangamon suffered a near miss by the bomb from another Zero that crashed into the ocean nearby.
- Sixteen men were killed on Santee, but after eleven minutes her damage control teams had the fires damped down.



A Yokosuka D4Y dive bomber, diving from the port side, misses with its bomb, which splashes to the starboard side of *Petrof Bay*, 25 October 1944, photographed onboard *Suwannee*.

25 October 1944 - Sea

- At 0800 another bombed up Zero made a hit in the middle of the escort carrier Suwanee's flight deck, causing severe personnel casualties.



View of the attack of a Japanese A6M5 kamikaze suicide plane aboard the U.S. Navy escort carrier USS Suwannee (CVE-27) off the Philippines on 25 October 1944: the kamikaze's 250 kilogram bomb has just exploded between flight and hangar decks and fire billows out.

25 October 1944 - Sea

- However, the flight deck was repaired in two hours.



View of the flight deck of the U.S. Navy escort carrier USS Suwannee (CVE-27), 90 minutes after a Japanese suicide plane's bomb had ripped a hole in it. The hole is patched and the ship is ready to land aircraft. Note that only four wires, instead of eight, are being used. All landings were made without mishap.

25 October 1944 - Leyte

- At 1051 another Zero crashed into the escort carrier St. Lo's hangar deck causing ammunition magazines to explode and forcing abandonment. The ship sank thirty minutes after impact.
- After seeing five Japanese aircraft crashing in sequence into American aircraft carriers, there was no doubt that the Japanese had initiated a new brand of aerial warfare.

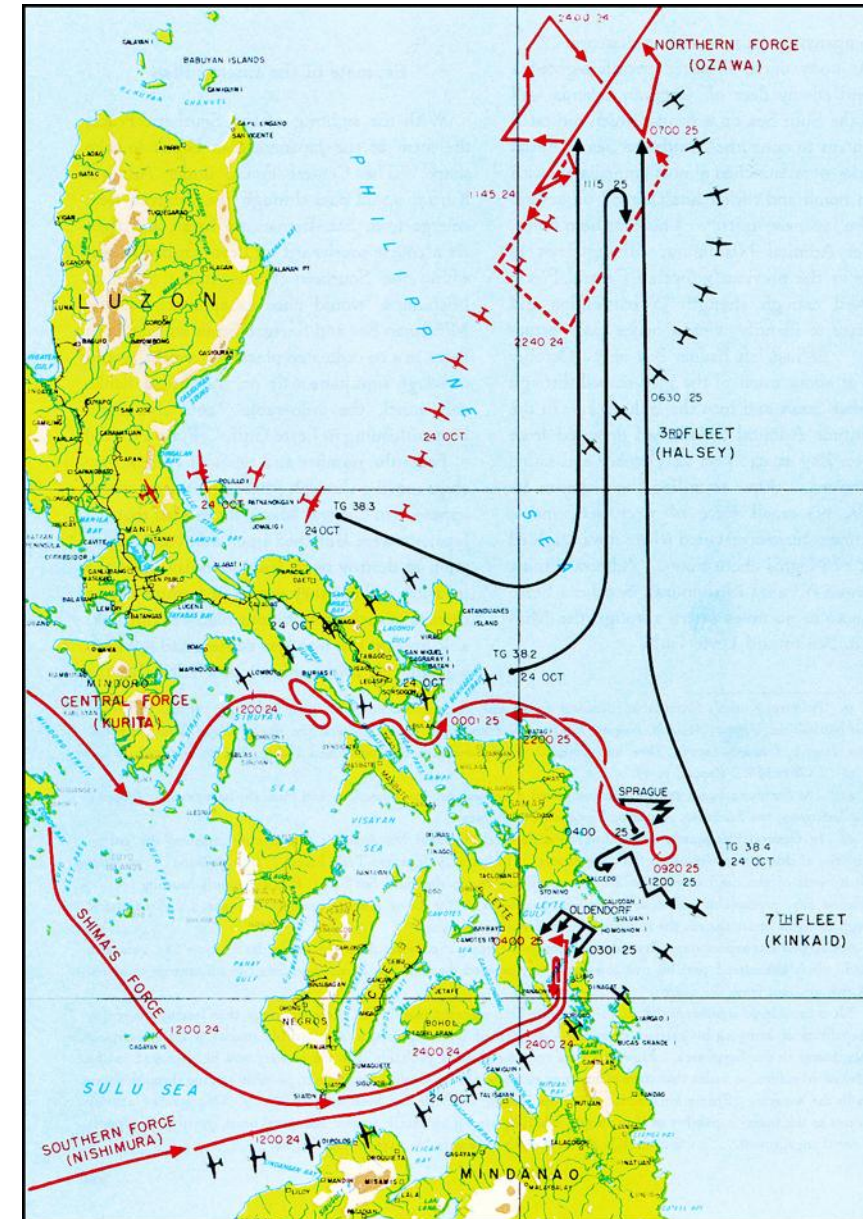


A kamikaze strikes St. Lo

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gl56oyDr0Eo>

25 October 1944 - Leyte

- At about **23:10**, the American submarine Jallao torpedoed and sank the light cruiser Tama of Ozawa's force.
- This was the last act of the Battle off Cape Engaño, and apart from some final air strikes on the retreating Japanese forces on 26 October, the conclusion of the Battle for Leyte Gulf.



26 October 1944 - Sea



The moment a kamikaze struck Suwannee on 26 October, the second strike on the ship in two days

27 October 1944 Australia

- Blamey (photo) in a letter to Curtin on 27th October repeated his earlier contentions and added:
- .. The Army deficiency by June 1945 is estimated at 26,000 plus 37,000, total 63,000. During recent weeks references have been made by Ministers to the arduous and difficult times that lie ahead of the armed forces in operations in the very near future.
- There will be casualties and losses, on what scale nobody knows.
- One thing, however, is certain. All six divisions and one armoured brigade, with their supporting forces overseas, will be in action. If the Army is to be deficient of 63,000 men as estimated at this vital stage, when the whole of its effective operational strength is employed in operations at one time (which is the maximum effort the Army has been called upon to undertake during the war), then the total force fighting the enemy cannot be adequately supported throughout these operations. The situation is indeed very grave. .
- . . If the further reduction of 40,000 is decided upon, I have no alternative but to advise the Government to inform General MacArthur that the Australian Army cannot be maintained at the strength allotted and that it will be necessary to reduce the expeditionary force from one army corps of two divisions and essential service elements to one division. This will bring the Australian expeditionary force to approximately the same dimensions as that of New Zealand .



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

000306

27 October 1944 Australia

- Curtin (photo) replied that he appreciated the desire of the three Services to maintain the greatest possible striking force—that was the wish of the Government—but Australian manpower was "totally inadequate to meet all the demands being made upon it for the Services, for high priority industrial purposes, and to make a contribution to the requirements of the Royal Naval force to be based on Australia".
- He pointed out that so far no direction that an additional 40,000 be released had been given.



28 October 1944 - Leyte

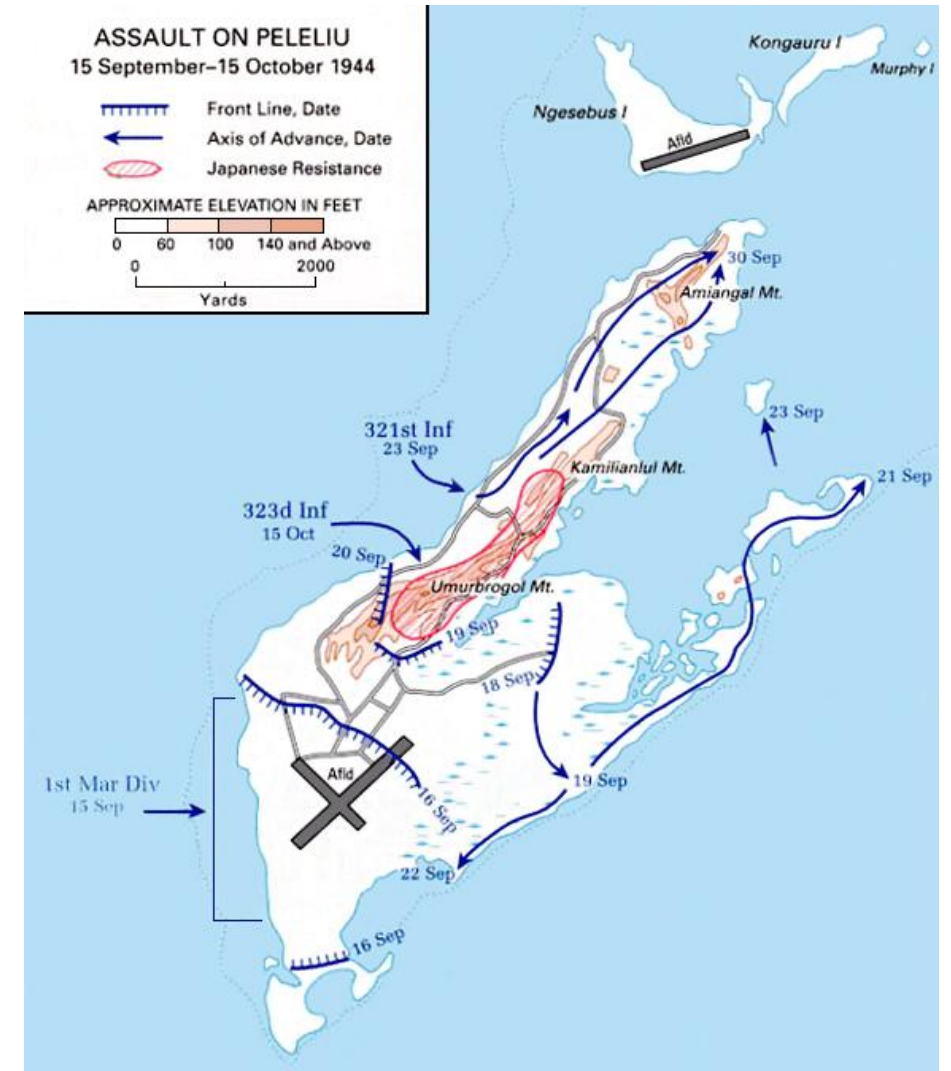
- Kamikazis placed a much greater load on fighter directors.
- It was no longer enough to break up and disperse a raiding group, or to bring down most of a group, now the FDOs had to bring down every separate attacker.
- The challenge for the FDOs was made even worse on 28 October when a Kamikazi managed to sneak in and damage the light cruiser Denver while pretending to be part of a returning air strike.



Mark 1 Mod 1 plotting tables in the fighter direction area of the light carrier Santee's CIC.

30 October 1944 - Palaus

- On 30 October the 81st Infantry Division took over command of Peleliu from the Marines.
- The Peleliu invasion force had steamed blindly into a killing zone that Marine Brigadier General Oliver P. Smith later described as "the most highly developed fortified system yet encountered in the Pacific."
- D-Day, 15 September 1944, was grim enough. The 1st Marine Division suffered more than 1,100 casualties.
- In addition, the unexpected shift in Japanese tactics to defense in depth prolonged the "short campaign" for weeks on end. ultimately costing 9,500 U.S. casualties.



October 1944 – New Guinea

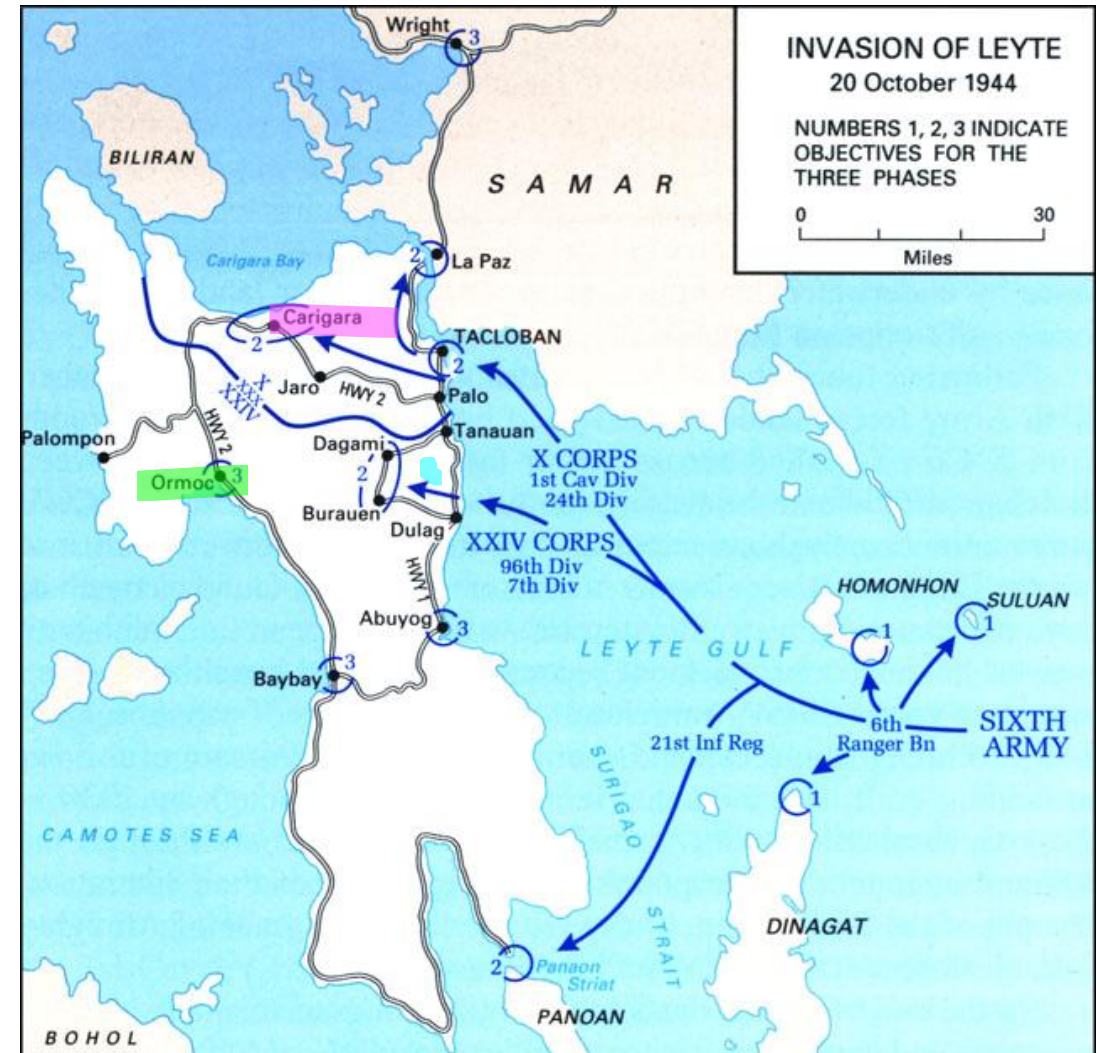
- In October Blamey decided to group these native battalions into a Pacific Islands Regiment, and decided also that a second New Guinea battalion should be raised, and a depot battalion formed.
- The New Guinea natives had long since proved that they made splendid troops for bush warfare.
- They quickly mastered their weapons, being instructed by sight and touch rather than by words; formal drill delighted them—ritual played an important part in their everyday life and military ritual was therefore accepted as being right and proper.
- They could move in the bush with such stealth and alertness that the risk of being outwitted by Japanese was slight. Their casualties were always relatively low: in about three years of fighting a total of 85 native infantrymen were killed in action and 201 wounded.



PIB soldiers around the Song River, March 1944

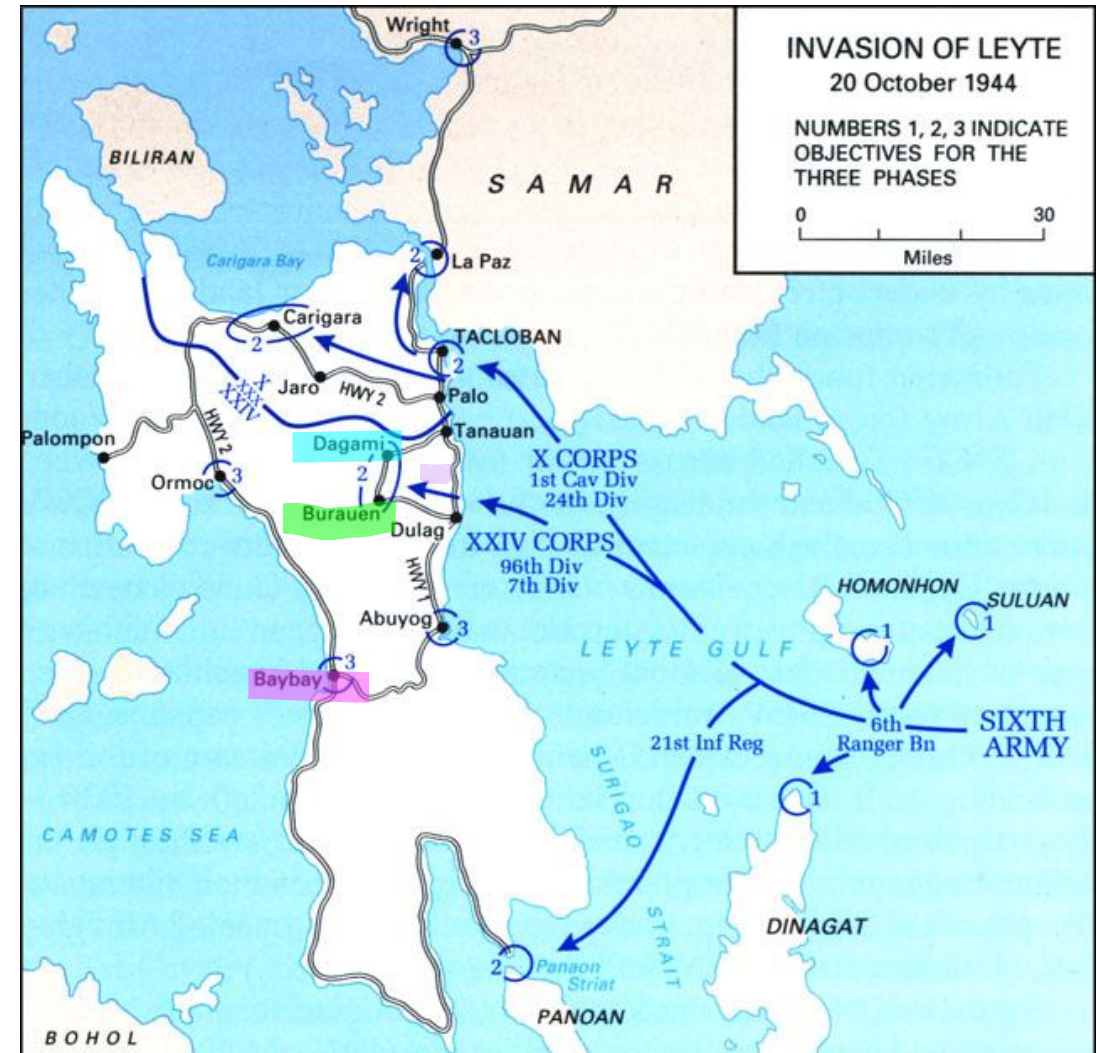
1 November 1944 – Leyte

- By 1 November, after a seven-day tank-infantry advance supported by artillery fire, the 19th and 34th Infantry Regiments had pushed through Leyte Valley and were within sight of the north coast and the port of Carigara, which the 2nd Cavalry Brigade occupied the next day after Suzuki ordered a withdrawal.
- In its drive through Leyte Valley, the 24th Division inflicted nearly 3,000 enemy casualties.
- These advances left only one major port on Leyte—Ormoc City on the west coast—under Japanese control.
- 96th Infantry Division was to clear Catmon Hill, a 1,400 ft promontory, the highest point in both corps beachheads. Under cover of incessant artillery and naval gunfire, Bradley's troops made their way through the swamps south and west of the high ground at Labiranan Head.
- After a three-day fight, the 382nd Infantry Regiment took a key Japanese supply base at Tabontabon, 5 mi inland, and killed some 350 Japanese on 28 October.



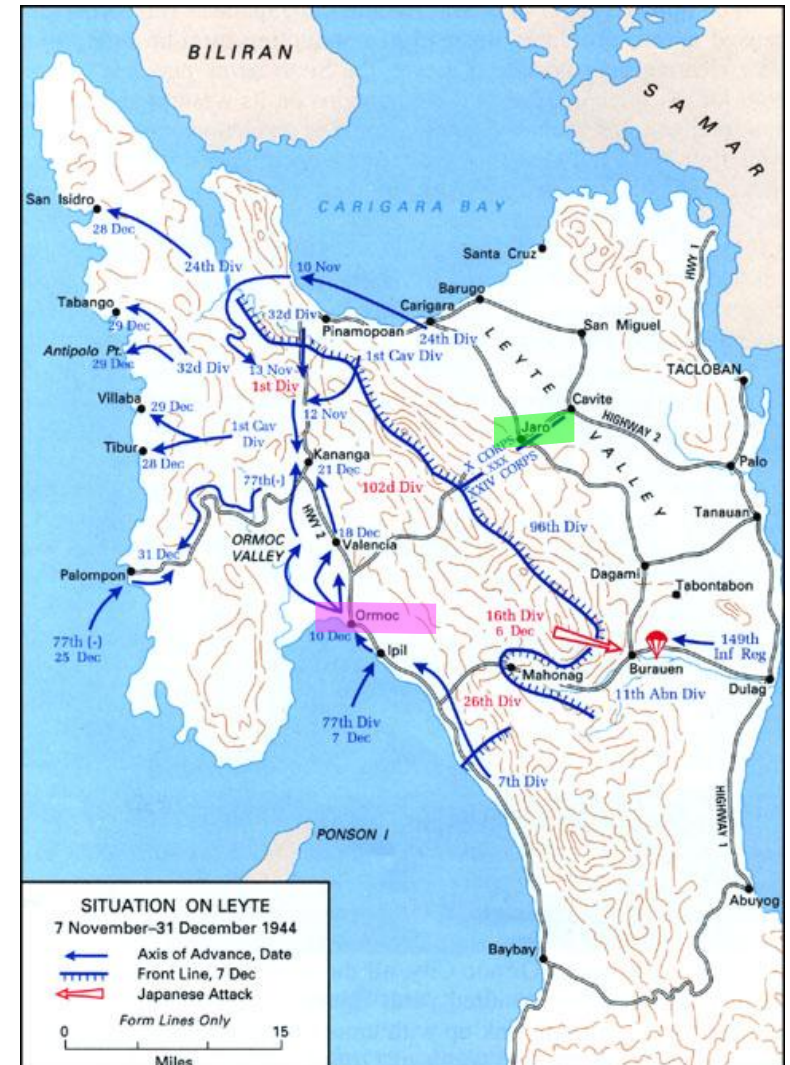
1 November 1944 – Leyte

- Two battalions from the 381st and 383rd Infantry Regiments slowly advanced up opposite sides of Catmon Hill and battled the Japanese resistance. When the mop-up of Catmon Hill was completed on 31 October, the Americans had cleared 53 pillboxes, 17 caves, and several heavy artillery positions.
- The 7th Infantry Div. moved inland against the Japanese airfields of San Pablo 1 and 2, Bayug, and Buri, using "flying wedges" of American tanks. The 767th Tank Battalion cleared the way for the infantrymen. Between Burauen and Julita, the 17th Infantry overcame fanatical but futile resistance from Japanese soldiers concealed in spider holes, who placed satchel charges on the hulls of the American tanks.
- A mile north, 32nd Infantry soldiers killed more than 400 Japanese at Buri airfield.
- While the 184th Infantry patrolled the corps' left flank, the 17th Infantry turned north toward Dagami. Using flamethrowers to root the enemy out of pillboxes and a cemetery they captured Dagami on 30 October.
- The 32nd Infantry's 2nd Battalion, preceded by the 7th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop patrolled west over the next four days through the mountains to Baybay, all without opposition.



1 November 1944 – Leyte

- With 432,000 Japanese soldiers in the Philippines, General Yamashita decided to make Leyte the main effort of the Japanese defense, and on 21 October, ordered the 35th Army to coordinate a decisive battle with the Imperial Japanese Navy.
- The 16th Division was to be reinforced by the 30th Infantry Division from Mindanao, landing on Ormoc Bay. The 102nd Infantry Division would occupy Jaro, where the 1st and 26th Infantry Divisions were concentrating.
- Battalions from the 55th and 57th Independent Mixed Brigades were on Leyte by 25 Oct.



1 November 1944 – Leyte

- As the Sixth Army pushed deeper into Leyte, the Japanese struck back in the air and at sea. On 24 October, some 200 enemy aircraft approached American beachheads and shipping from the north.
- Fifty American land-based aircraft rose to intercept them and claimed to have shot down between 66 and 84 of the attackers.
- Day and night air raids continued over the next four days, damaging supply dumps ashore and threatening American shipping. But by 28 October, counterattacks by US aircraft on Japanese airfields and shipping on other islands so reduced enemy air strength that conventional air raids ceased to be a major threat.



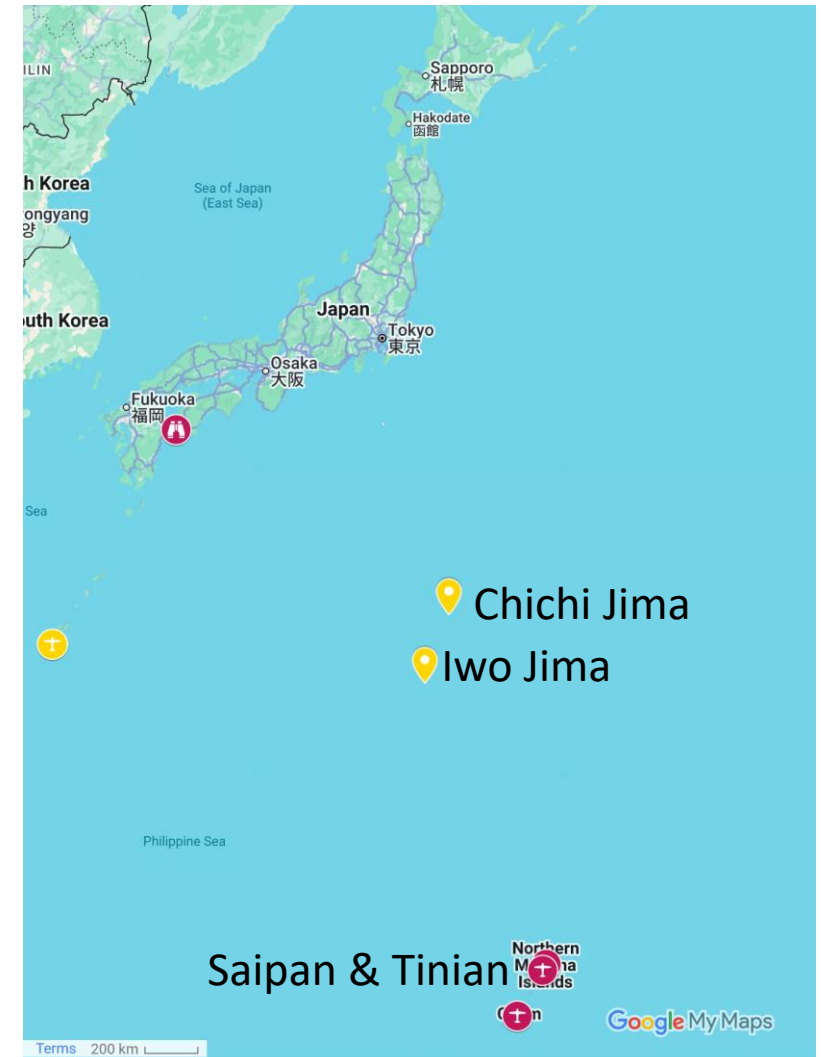
A US anti-aircraft gun at Tacloban airfield in action

1 November 1944 – Australian Army

- The disposition of troops in the South-West Pacific Area at the beginning of November 1944 showed a total strength in the Australian Military Forces (excluding women's services) of 396,010 (178,423 in operational units and 217,587 in base, lines of communication and training units).
- Of the total Australian strength in operational units, 37,153 were in New Guinea and the rest were still on the Australian mainland.
- The United States had 257,228 combat troops in New Guinea, New Britain and adjacent islands and 107,004 in the Philippines as well as numbers of men in other operational areas.

1 November 1944 - B29

- The Twentieth Air Force's XXI Bomber Command began arriving in the Mariana Islands during October 1944.
- The Command was led by Brigadier General Haywood S. Hansell, who had participated in Eighth Air Force operations against Germany.
- XXI Bomber Command B-29s flew six practice missions against targets in the Central Pacific during October and November in preparation for their first attack on Japan.
- On 1 November, an F-13 photo reconnaissance variant of the B-29 from the 3rd Photographic Reconnaissance Squadron overflew Tokyo; this was the first American aircraft to fly over the city since the Doolittle Raid.



1 November 1944 - B29

- AN/APQ-13 radar was an American ground scanning radar developed by Bell Laboratories, Western Electric, and MIT as an improved model of the airborne H2X radar, itself developed from the first ground scanning radar, the British H2S.
- It was used on B-29s in the Pacific theater for high altitude area bombing, search and navigation.
- Computation for bombing could be performed by an impact predictor.
- The radome was carried on the aircraft belly between the bomb bays and was partially retractable on early models. The radar operated at a frequency of 9375 ± 45 megahertz and used a superheterodyne receiver.



Boeing SB-29 "Super Dumbo" with AN/APQ-13 radome between the nose landing gear and the airborne lifeboat

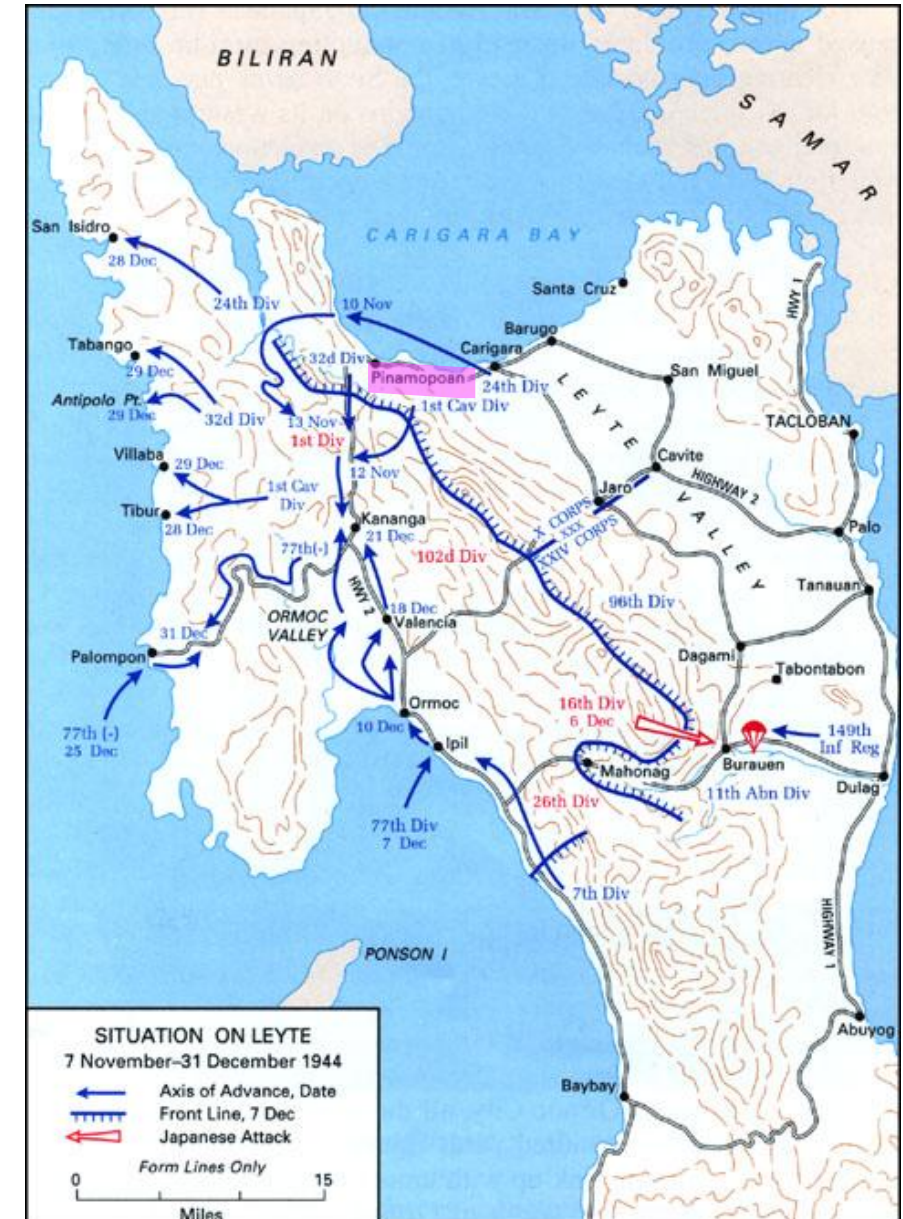
1st November

- On 1st November the Sydney Morning Herald in a leading article commenting on a statement by Blamey that "90,000 disciplined and armed Japanese" between Wewak and Bougainville would have to be "rooted out", had predicted "mopping up operations on a very formidable scale"; and seemed a little doubtful as to the necessity for employing large forces in these isolated areas rather than against "active centres of enemy power".



3 November 1944 - Leyte

- The Japanese reinforcement presented severe problems for Krueger and MacArthur. Instead of mopping up operations after clearing the east side of Leyte, the Sixth Army had to prepare for extended combat in the mountains on its western side.
- Gen. Krueger planned a giant pincer operation to clear Ormoc Vally, with X Corps forces moving south, and XXIV Corps units pushing north from Baybay.
- Krueger mobilized his reserve forces, the 32nd and 77th Infantry Divisions and MacArthur activated the 11th Airborne Division.
- On 3 November, the 34th Infantry Regiment moved out from west of Carigara to sweep the rest of the northern coast before turning south into the mountains.
- The 1st Battalion soon came under attack from a ridge along the highway. Supported by the 63rd Field Artillery Battalion, the unit cleared the ridge, and the 34th Infantry continued unopposed that night through the town of Pinamopoan, recovering numerous heavy weapons abandoned by the enemy, then halted at the point where Highway 2 turns south into the mountains.



3 November 1944 - Australia

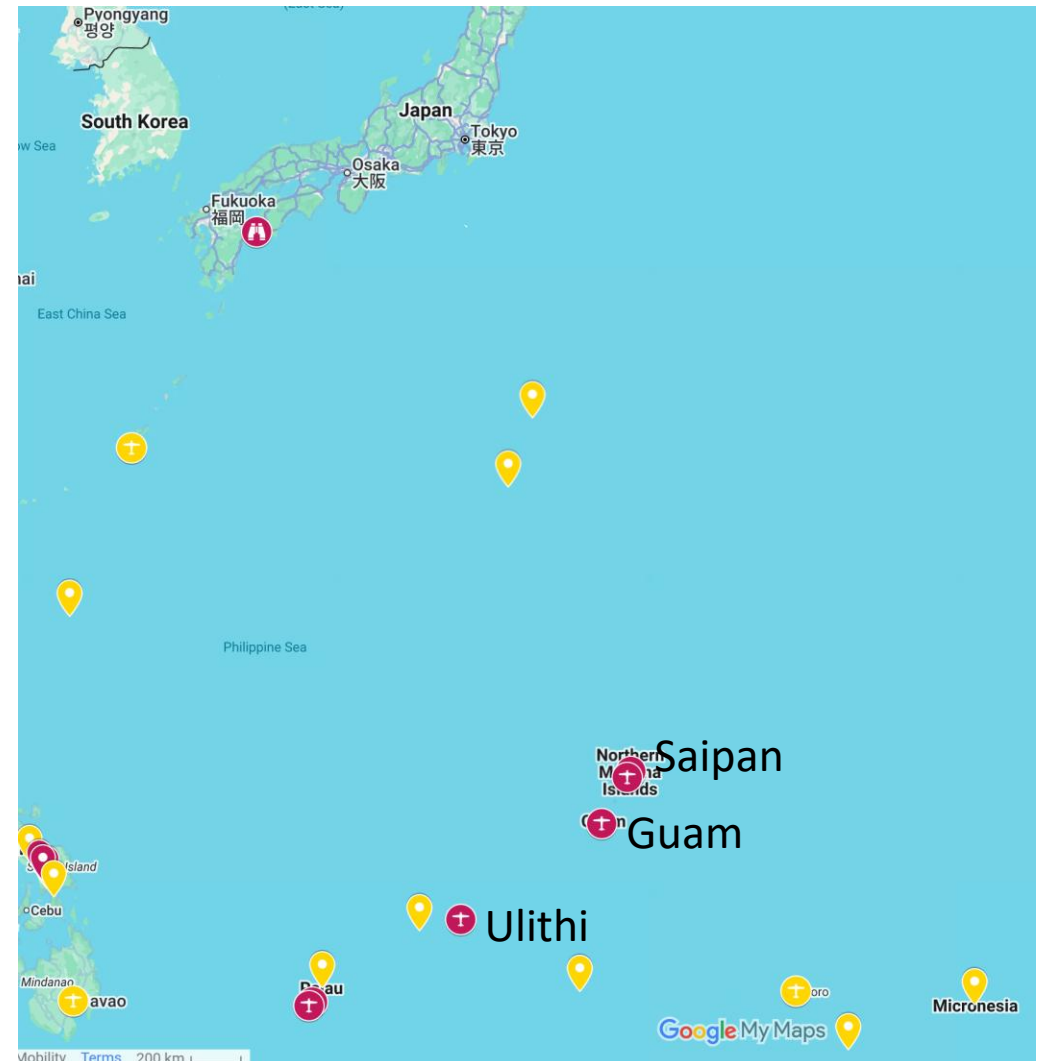
- By 1944—a time when he was travelling to and from London and Washington for meetings with Churchill, Roosevelt and other Allied leaders—Curtin had already developed heart disease.
- Returning from a break in Perth following his overseas trip and months of heavy wartime stress Curtin suffered a major heart attack on 3 November 1944 in Melbourne while traveling back by train from Perth to Canberra.
- Frank Forde Minister for the Army and Deputy Prime Minister became Acting Prime Minister in Curtin's absence.
- Curtin did not return to work until January 1945.
- With the end of the war in sight, his health began to deteriorate seriously and at a rapid pace.



British home secretary Herbert Morrison in friendly conversation with John Curtin, with prime minister Winston Churchill looking on. Curtin was in London for a meeting of leaders of Commonwealth countries in May 1944. Struggles with Churchill to get Australian forces returned to defend Australia had been a continual challenge for Curtin.

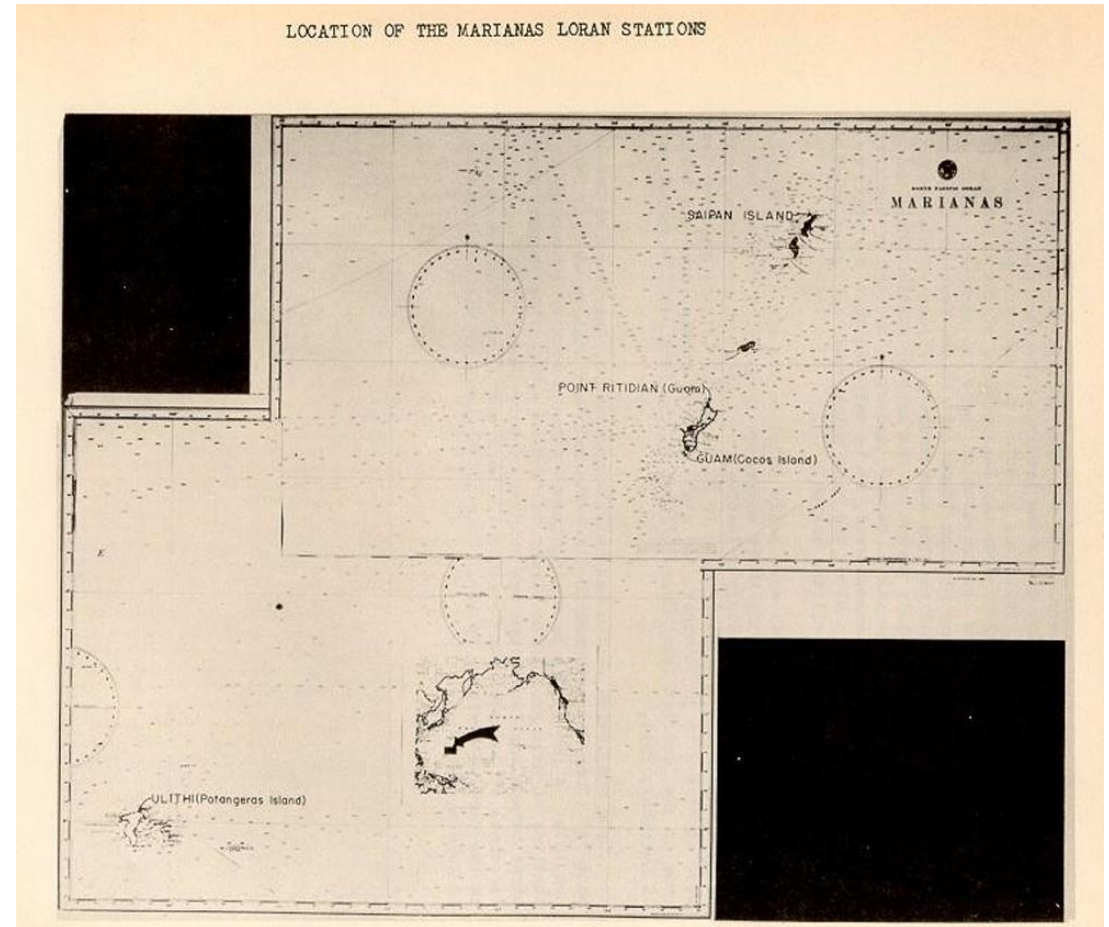
5 November 1944 - B29

- LORAN was declared operational in the Atlantic in early 1943.
- In the summer of 1943, the USCG completed the first independent installation of LORAN transmitting stations in the Aleutian Islands.
- The Coast Guards continued the work and installed more stations in the Pacific closely on the heels of the invading forces.
- Of special significance were stations in the Marianas, which would provide effective guidance for the 20th Air Force in its bombing of Japan.
- This chain was to consist of stations on Saipan, Guam, and Ulithi,



5 November 1944 - Marianas LORAN B29

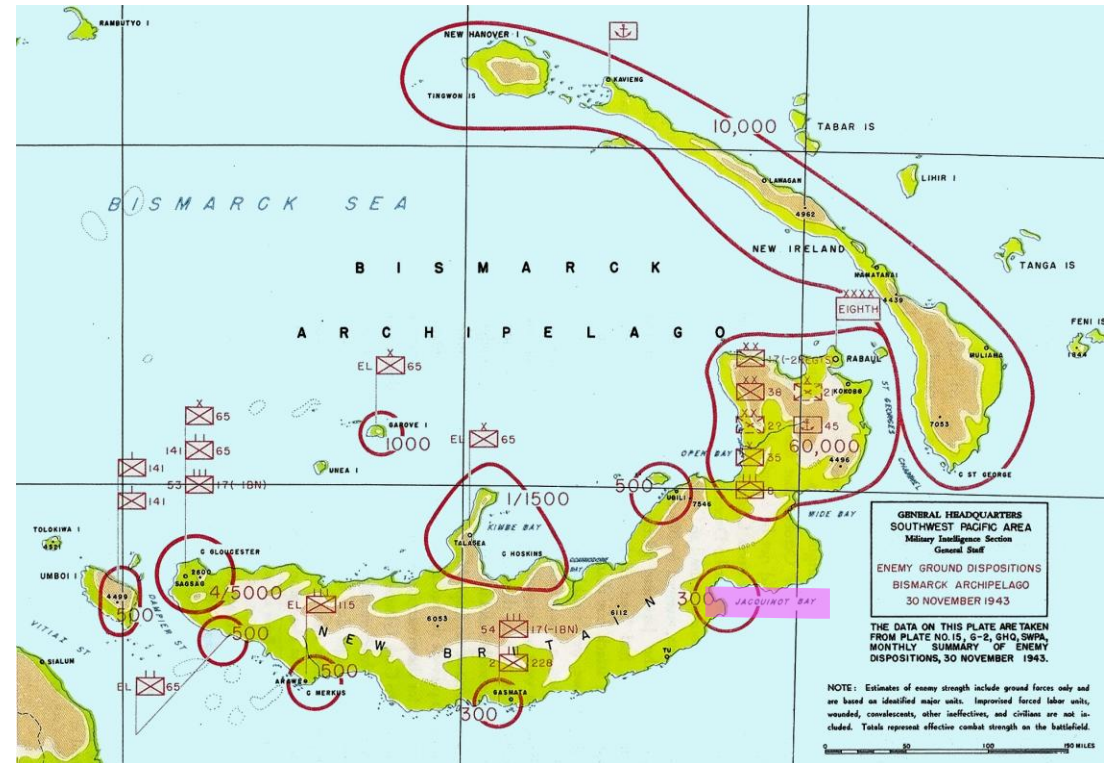
- American forces gained complete possession of Saipan by 9 July.
- Surveys for the stations on Saipan and Guam were made during September and October, 1944
- Construction of the chain was assigned to the Coast Guard Construction Detachment C, which had built the Hawaiian chain.
- The USS MENKAR departed Honolulu, for the Mariana Islands on 15 October 1944, and reached Saipan on 31 October. On 2 November she was alongside a recently constructed pontoon dock.
- By 4 November all gear was on site, and 35 construction men and the manning crew were at their temporary camp, erected during the unloading.
- Work on the station was begun early on the morning of 5 November. The first difficulty was in getting the Army to cooperate in the removal of a temporary camp of a field artillery battalion occupying approximately half of the area necessary for the ground system. A road leading to a bomb dump which passed through the Loran site also needed to be relocated.
- However, this matter was resolved when Colonel Wilson of the 21st Bomber Command persuaded the Army Ground Forces of the urgency of establishing Loran service, and they promptly cooperated.



LOCATION OF THE MARIANAS LORAN STATIONS

Early November 1944 – New Britain

- Early in November, the remaining elements of the Australian 6th Infantry Brigade landed at **Jacquinet Bay**.
- In the weeks that followed, large amounts of stores and equipment were landed, along with support personnel and labourers to begin construction on facilities including roads, an airstrip, dock facilities, and a general hospital.



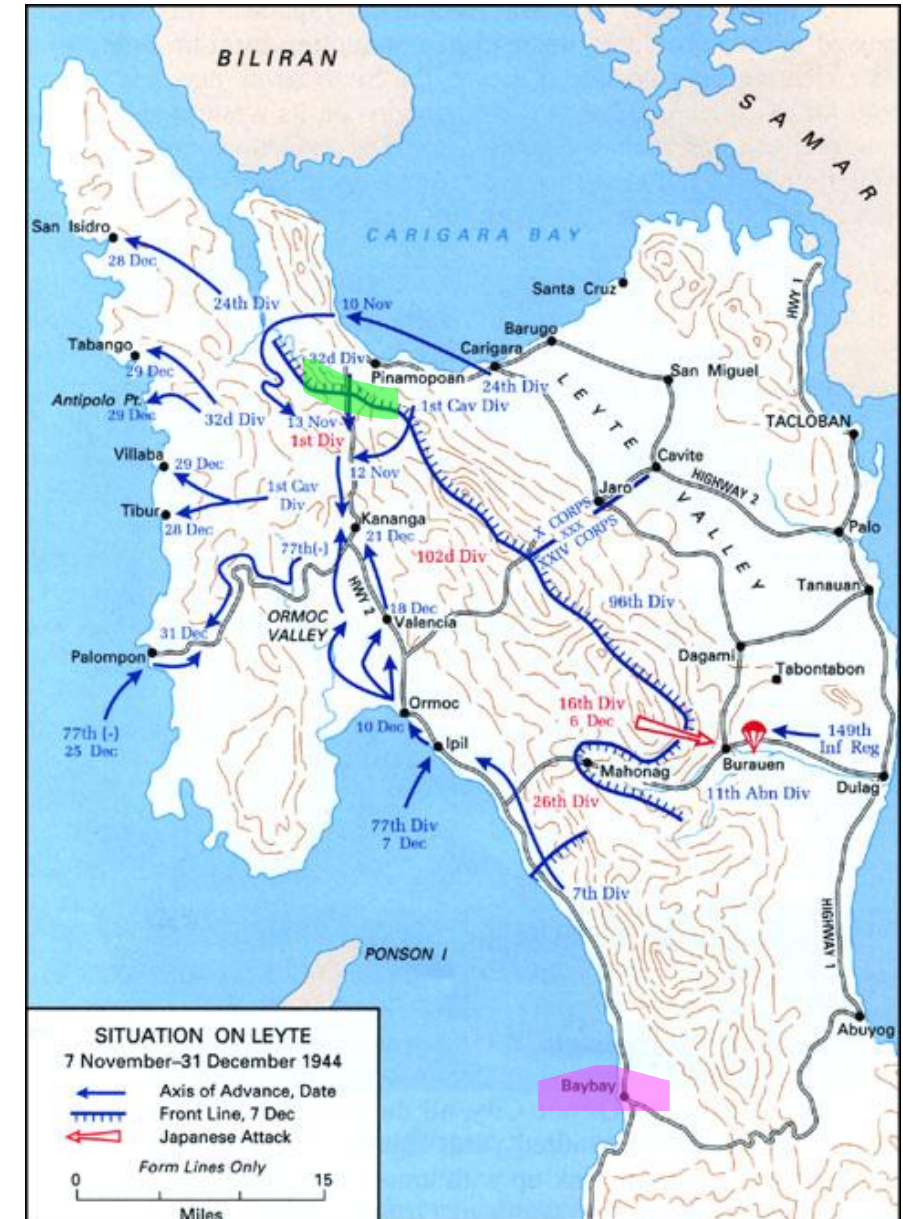
Early November 1944 – New Britain

- Soldiers from the 1st New Guinea Infantry Battalion on a transport ship near Jacquinot Bay in November 1944.
- US landing craft from the 594th Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment provided support until the Australian Landing Craft Company arrived in February 1945.



7 November 1944 - Leyte

- On the 7th of November the 21st Infantry went into its first sustained combat on Leyte when it moved into the mountains along Highway 2, near Carigara Bay.
- The fresh regiment immediately ran into strong defenses of the newly arrived Japanese 1st Division, aligned from east to west across the road and anchored on a network of fighting positions built of heavy logs and interconnecting trench lines and countless spider holes, which became known as "Breakneck Ridge" to the Americans.
- General Krueger ordered the 1st Cavalry to join the 24th Infantry Division in the attack south, and the X and XXIV Corps to block routes through the central mountain range, anticipating General Suzuki's renewed attack with the arrival of his 26th Infantry Division.
- The XXIV Corps had the 7th Infantry Division in Baybay. Plus, Krueger had access to the 32nd and 77th Infantry Divisions, and the 11th Airborne Division, which MacArthur was staging in Leyte in preparation of the Luzon invasion.
- A typhoon began on 8 November, and the heavy rain that followed for several days further impeded American progress.



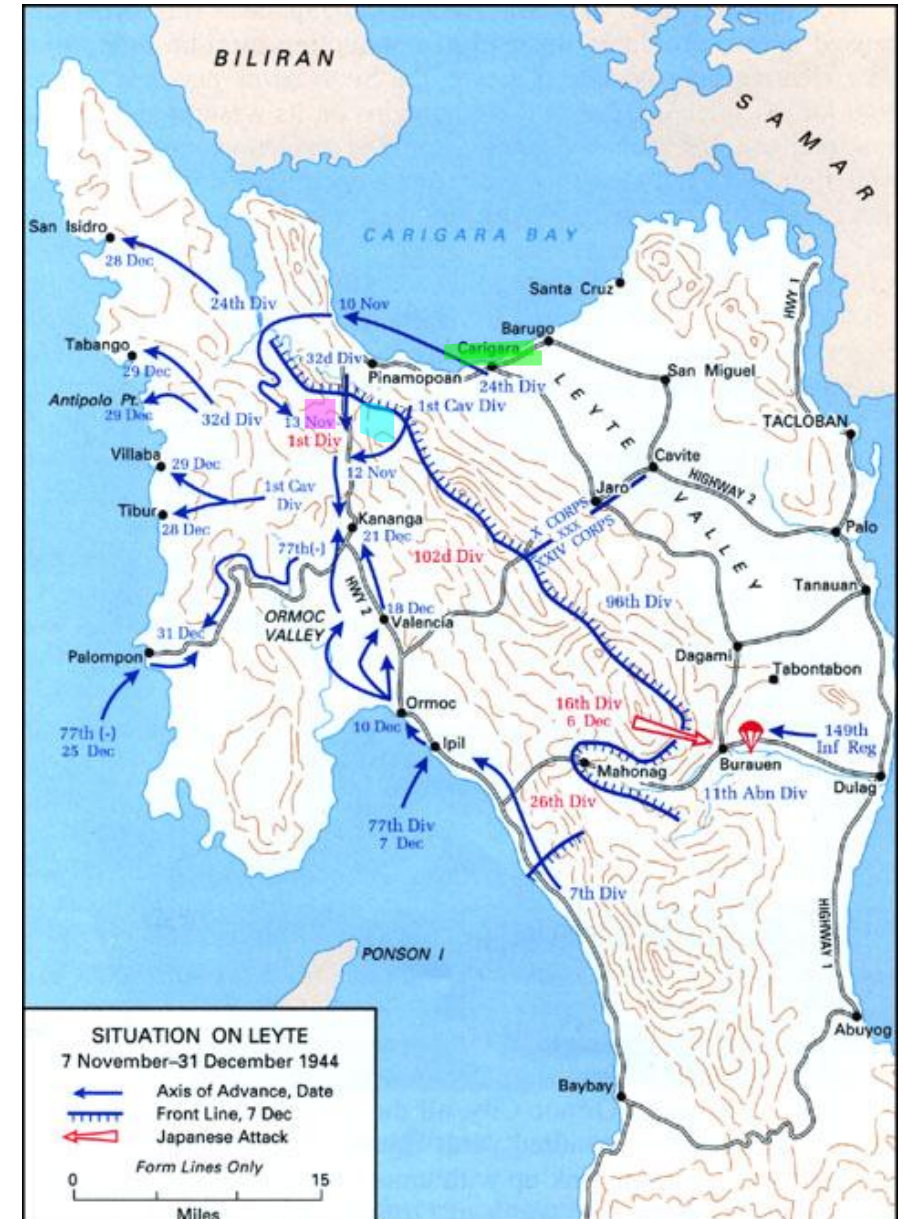
7 November 1944 – Washington DC

- President Franklin D. Roosevelt defeated the Republican candidate New York Governor Thomas E. Dewey to win a fourth term.
- Concerned that Roosevelt's ill health would mean the vice president would likely become president, the Democratic convention had dropped Roosevelt's vice president Henry A. Wallace in favor of the lesser known Senator Harry S. Truman of Missouri.
- The incumbent Sheridan Downey defeated Frederick Houser for the Californian senate seat.



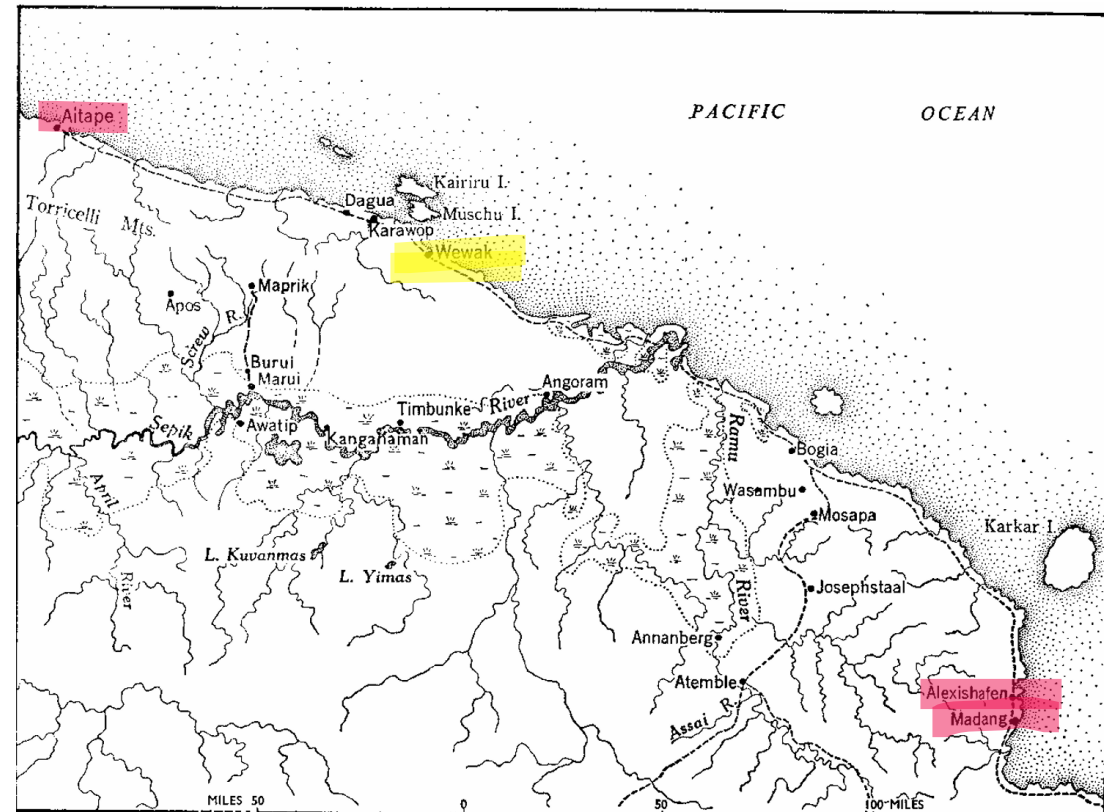
7 -13 November 1944 - Leyte

- On the east, the 19th Infantry's 2nd Battalion, swung east around Hill 1525 behind the enemy right flank, cutting back to Highway 2, 3 mi south of 'Breakneck Ridge', blocking the Japanese supply line.
- On the west, Irving sent the 34th Infantry's 1st Battalion, over water from the Carigara area to a point 2 mi west of the southward turn of Highway 2 and moved it inland.
- This move was made in eighteen LVTs of the 727th Amphibian Tractor Battalion. After crossing a ridge line and the Leyte River, they approached the enemy left flank at 900 ft on Kilay Ridge, the highest terrain behind the main battle area.
- Both battalions reached positions only about 1,000 yd apart on opposite sides of the highway by 13 November despite strong opposition and heavy rains.
- The Americans were aided by the 1st Battalion, 96th Philippine Infantry, a local guide who "owned" Kilay Ridge, and Filipinos carrying supplies.



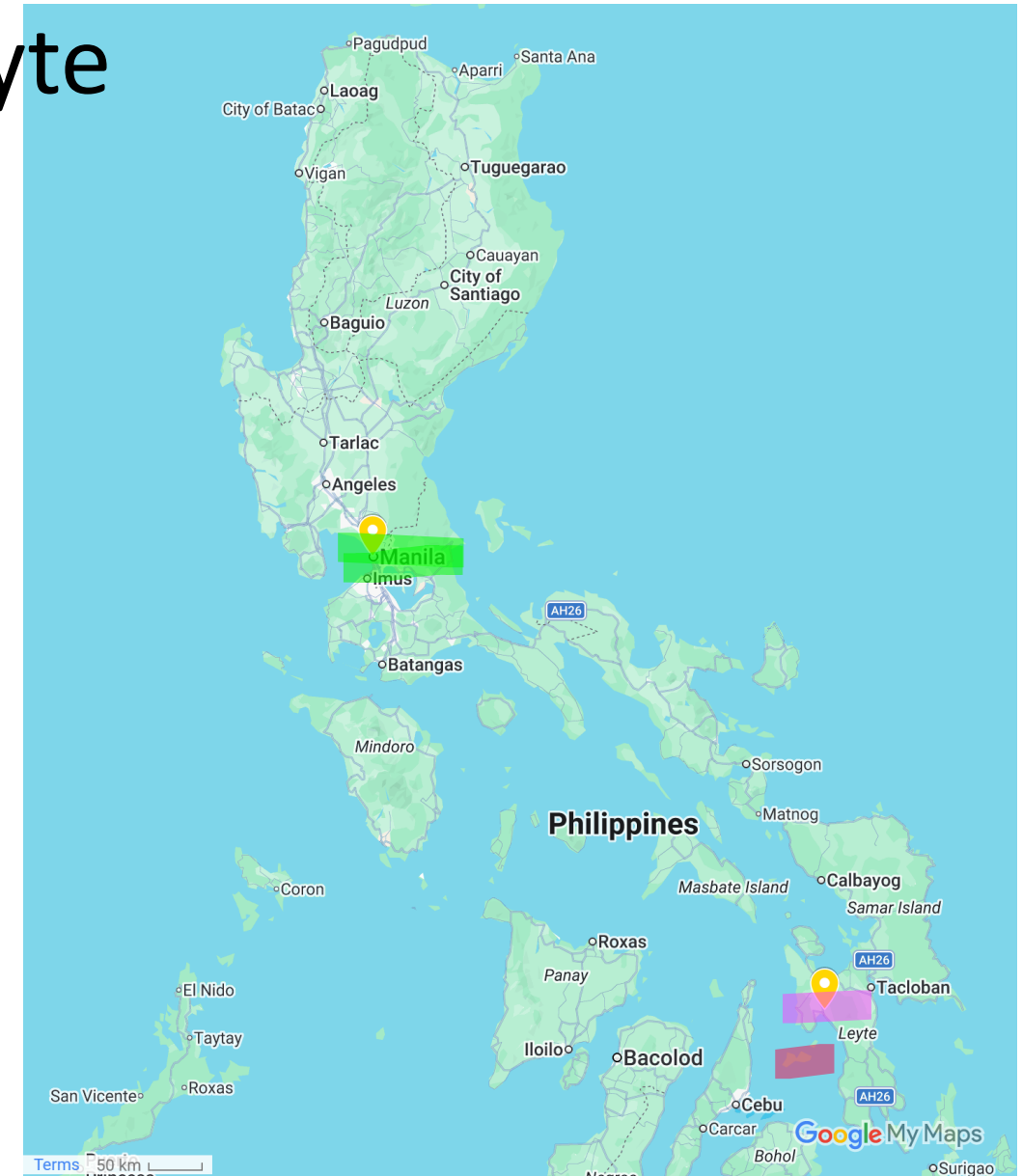
8 November 1944 - Aitape

- General Sturdee on 18th October had issued to General Stevens an operation instruction in which he defined the division's role thus:
- (a) To defend airfield and radar installations in the Aitape-Tadji area ;
- (b) To prevent movement westward of Japanese forces in the area and seize every opportunity for the destruction of these forces;
- (c) To give maximum help to A.I.B. and Angau units in the area in their tasks of gaining Intelligence, establishing patrol bases and protecting the native population.
- On 8th November General Stevens had opened his head quarters at Aitape.



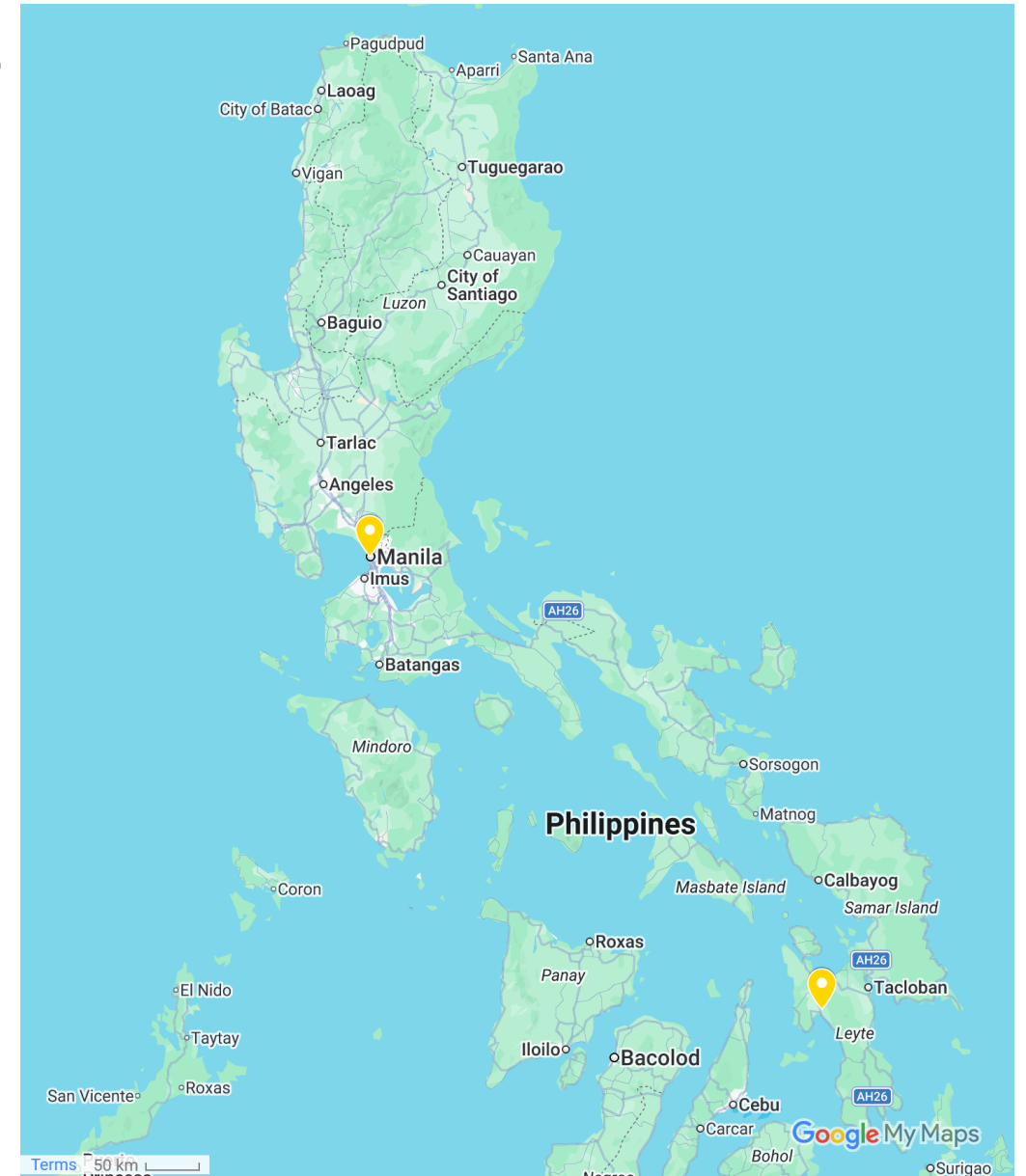
8–10 November 1944 - Leyte

- On 8–9 November, the Japanese dispatched two convoys, TA-3 and TA-4, from **Manila** to **Ormoc Bay**.
- The convoys were spaced one day apart so that the destroyers escorting the first convoy could double back and escort the second.
- The convoys were spotted on November 9.
- On 10 November the 38th Bomb Group, based on Morotai, sent 32 B-25 Mitchells escorted by 37 P-47 Thunderbolts to attack TA-4 near **Ponson Island**.
- Reaching the convoy just before noon, the B-25s attacked at minimum altitude in pairs, sinking the two largest transports, the landing craft carrier Takatsu Maru and transport Kashii Maru, disabling a third, and sinking two of the patrol craft escorts at a cost of seven bombers.
- But the Japanese transports had been able to put ashore the 10,000 soldiers they had been carrying, be it with only a fraction of the supplies.



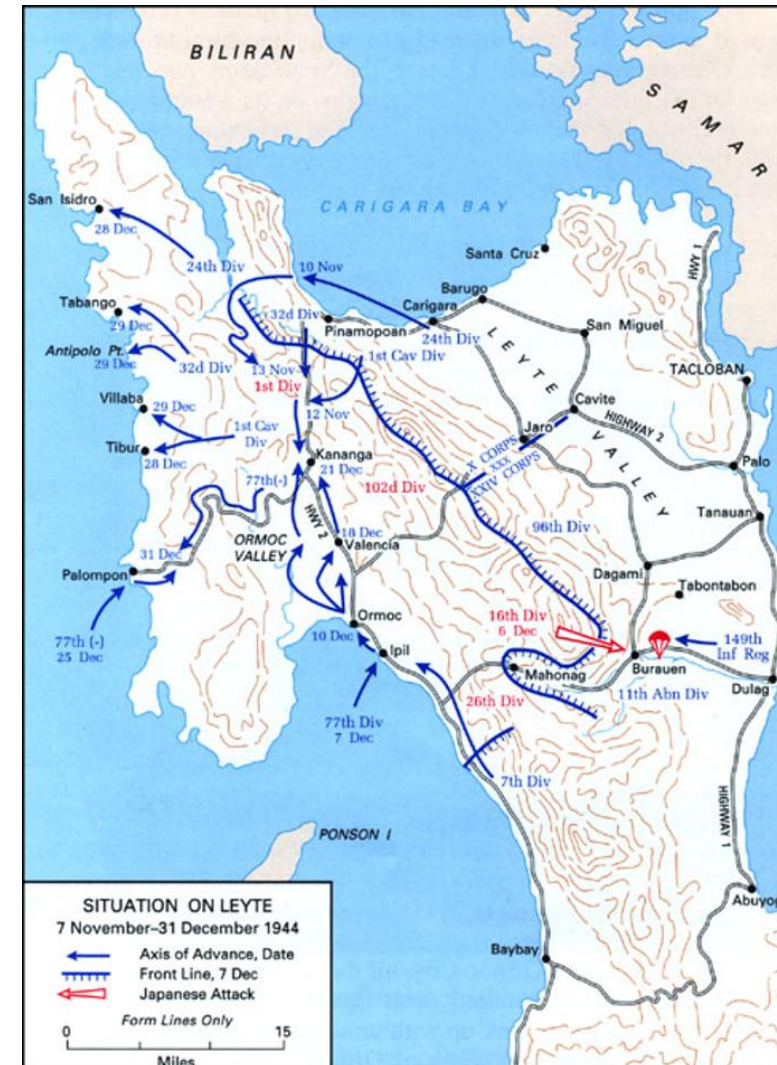
11 November 1944 - Leyte

- On 11 November, 3rd Fleet commander Admiral Halsey ordered an attack by 350 planes of Task Force 38 on the combined convoys.
- Four destroyers – Shimakaze, Wakatsuki, Hamanami and Naganami – and four transports Mikasa Maru, Taizan Maru, Seiho Maru and Tensho Maru were sunk, with many of the 4,000 soldiers on board killed.
- Rear Admiral Mikio Hayakawa went down with Shimakaze, and some 1,000 sailors from the 8 ships were killed.



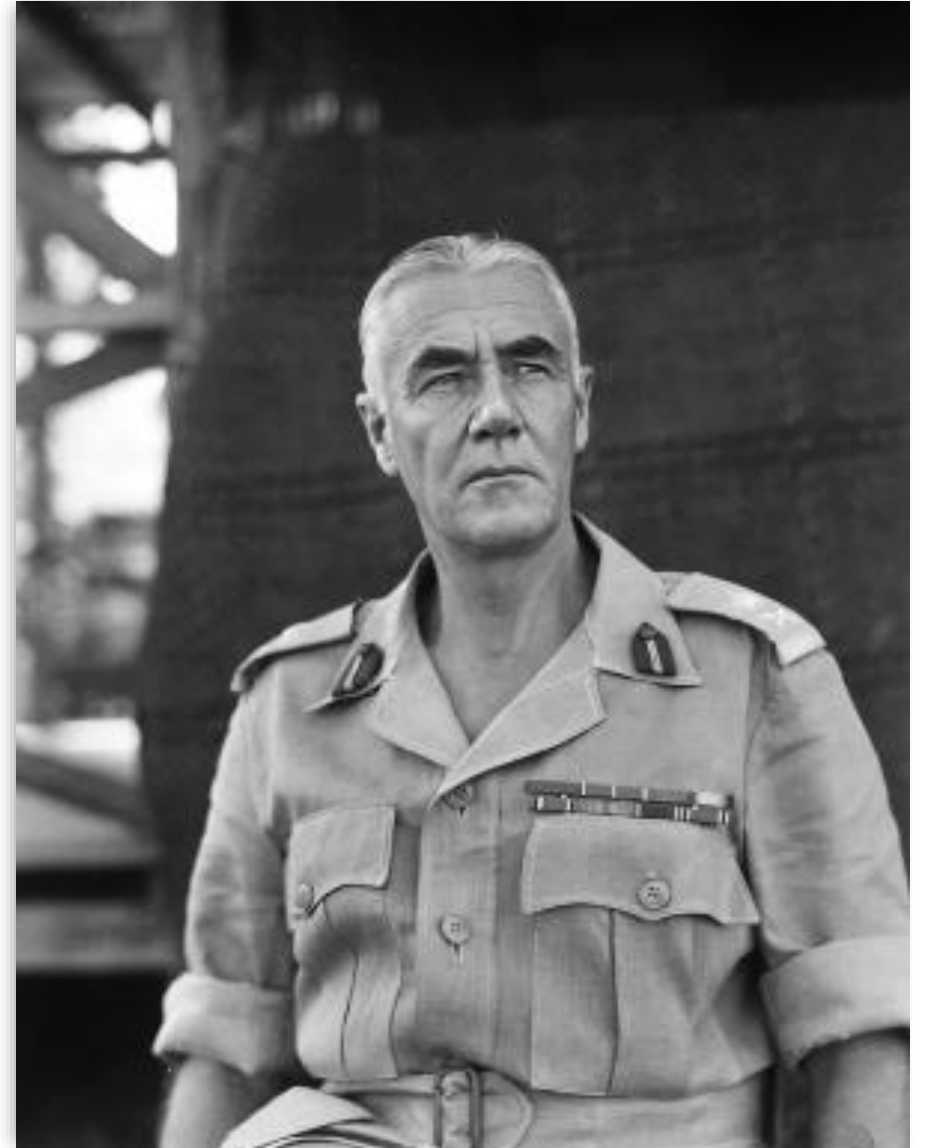
11 – 14 November 1944 - Leyte

- The Japanese had brought forward army reinforcements and by 11th November had put ashore on Leyte all or most of the 102nd Division, the 30th, the 1st and the 26th (the last two from China).
- MacArthur landed the 32nd American Division on 14th November and the 11th Airborne and 77th by the 23rd and had seven divisions ashore to oppose five Japanese.



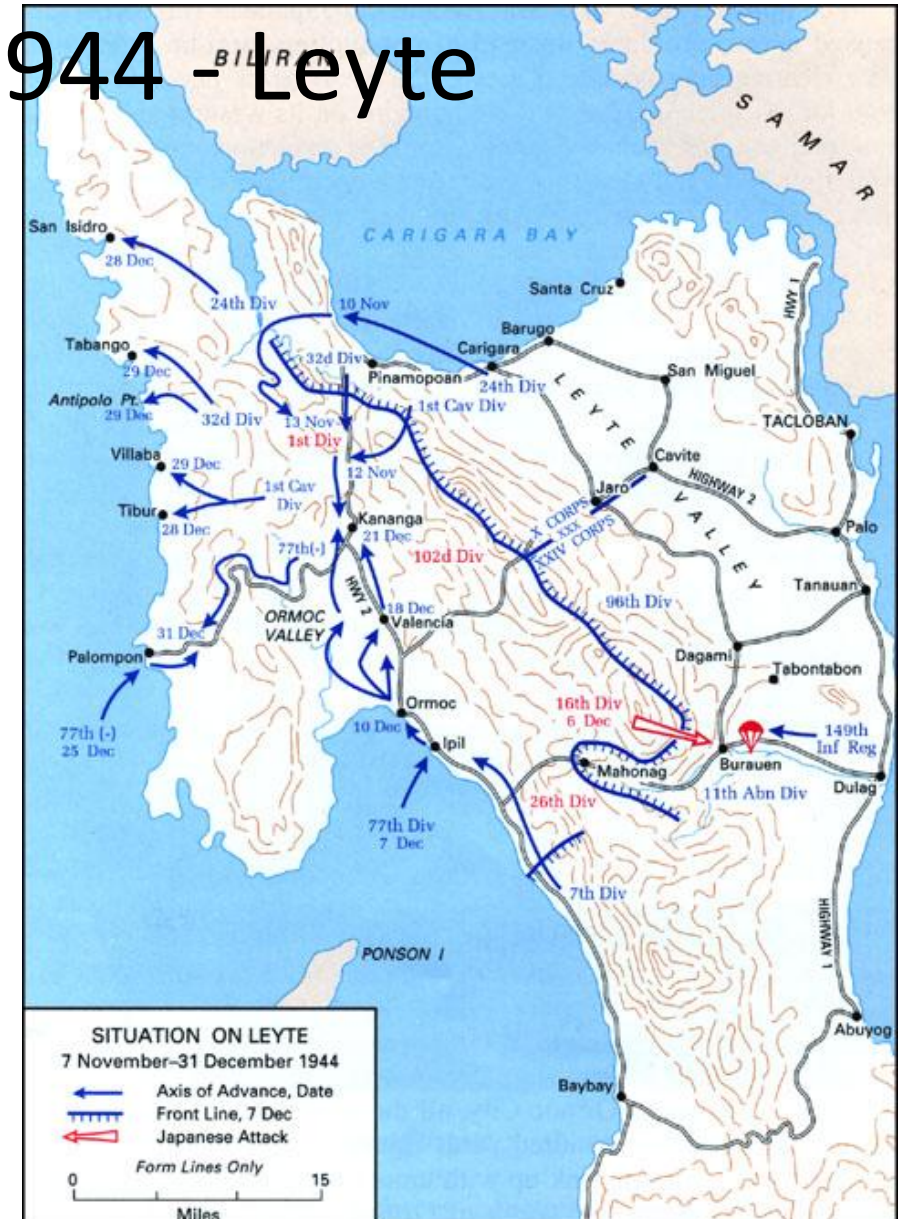
13 November 1944 – New Guinea

- After consulting with Blamey, Sturdee (photo) on 13th November issued a new instruction in which he said that it was considered unwise to undertake major offensive operations to destroy the enemy until more information was available.
- It added: In order (a) to obtain the required information, (b) to maintain the offensive spirit in our troops, and (c) to harass the enemy and retain moral superiority over him, offensive operations will consist of patrols and minor raids by land, sea and air, so far as our resources will permit.
- Operations will be divided into three phases:
 - A. Patrols and raids . . . ;
 - B. Based on the information obtained in Phase A, the preparation of plans for major offensive operations;
 - C. Offensive operations designed to destroy the enemy.
- Phase C will not be undertaken without prior approval from this headquarters.



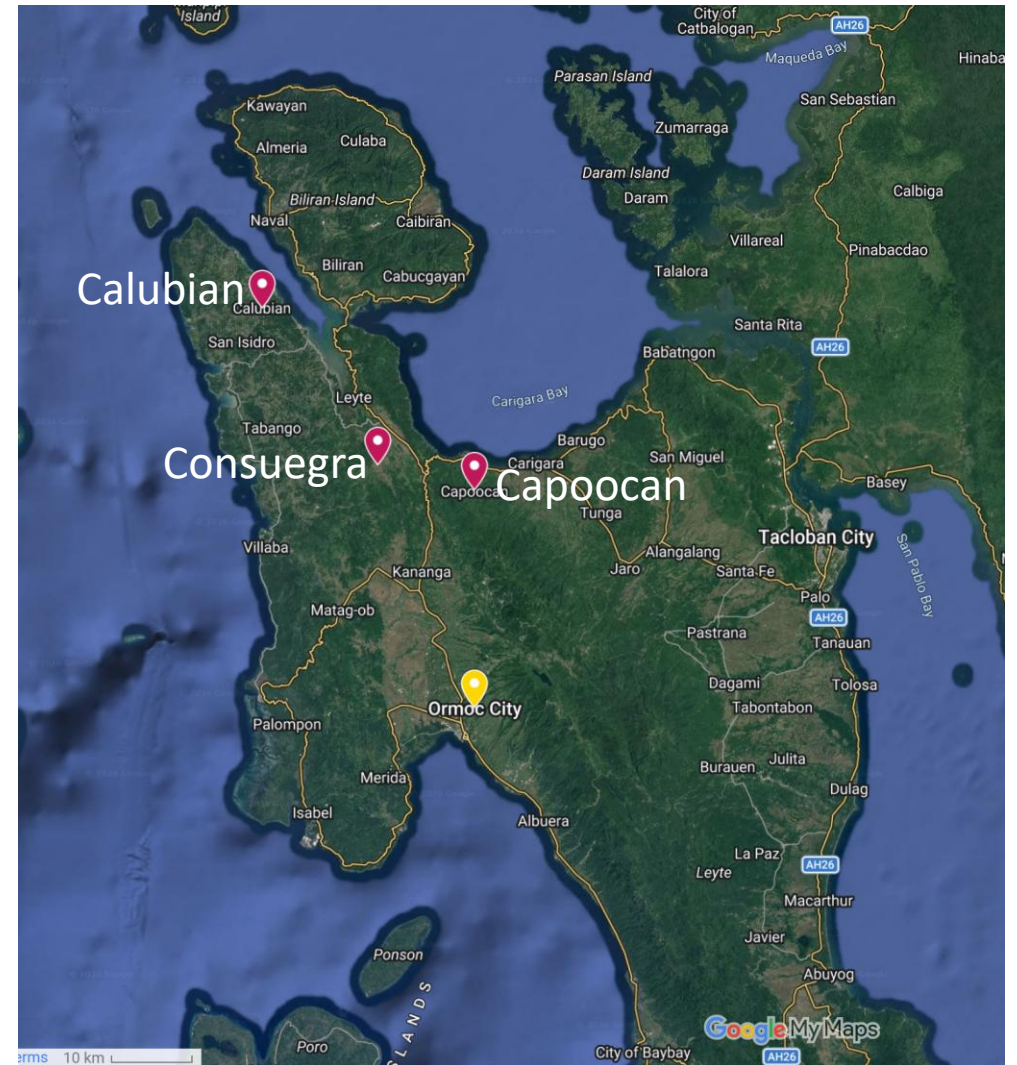
13 November – 2 December 1944 - Leyte

- It took the 34th Infantry's 1st Battalion two weeks of struggle through mud and rain—often dangerously close to friendly mortar and artillery fire—to root the Japanese out of fighting positions on the way up Kilay Ridge.
- **On 2 December** 1/34 finally cleared the heights overlooking the road, and 32nd Division units quickly took over.
- 1/34 suffered 26 killed, 101 wounded and two missing, in contrast to 900 Japanese dead.



13 November – 19 December 1944 - Leyte

- Throughout this phase, American efforts had become increasingly hampered by logistical problems. Mountainous terrain and impassable roads forced Sixth Army transportation units to improvise resupply trains of Navy landing craft, tracked landing vehicles, airdrops, artillery tractors, trucks, even carabaos and hundreds of barefoot Filipino bearers.
- The 727th Amphibian Tractor Battalion made daily, often multiple, trips with ammunition and rations between Capoocan and Calubian. From Calubian, the 727th tractors would navigate the Naga River to Consuegra and then traverse overland to Agahang. On their return trip, they would evacuate the casualties.



21 November 1944 - Pacific

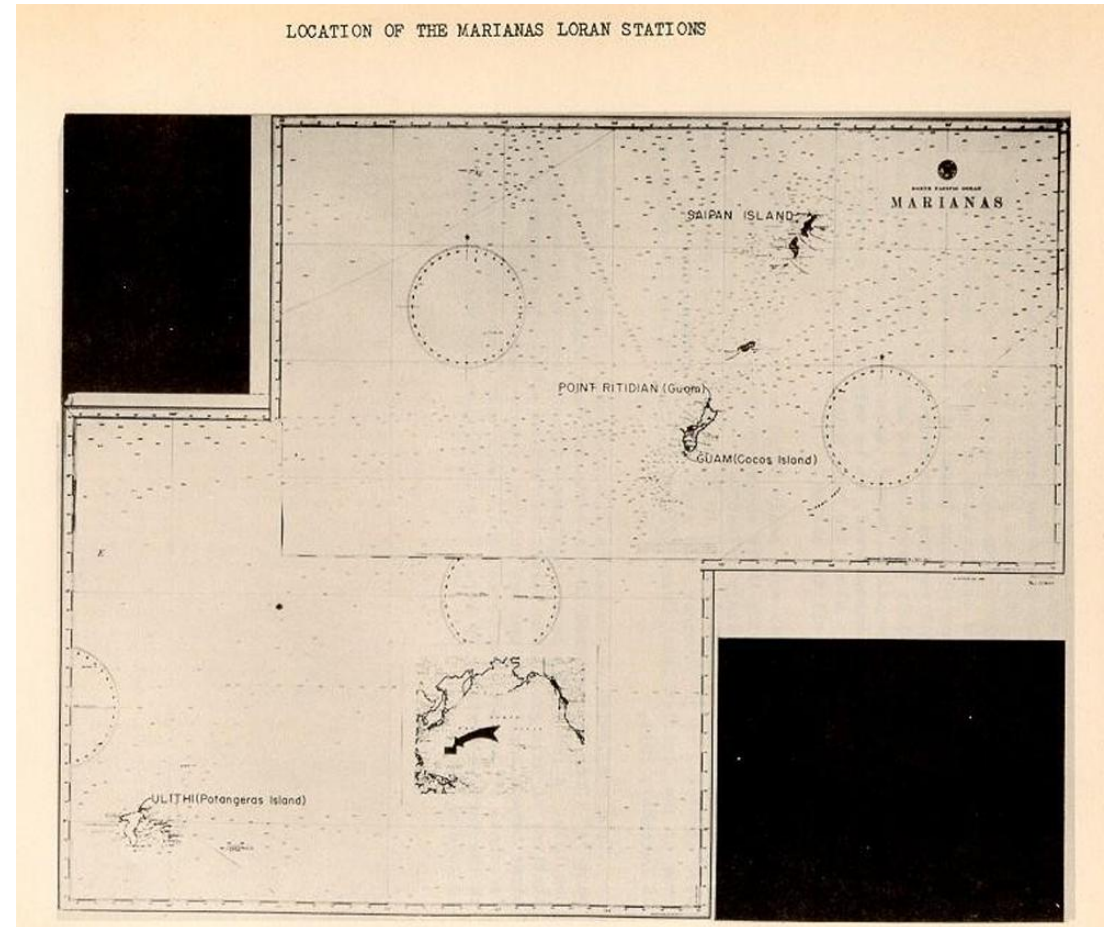
- On 16 November, following a US air raid on Brunei, the battleships Yamato, Nagato, Kongo and the rest of the First Fleet, departed from Brunei bound for Kure for a major reorganization of the fleet and battle repairs.
- On 20 November, they entered the Formosa Strait. Shortly after midnight on 21 November, the submarine USS Sealion made radar contact with the fleet at 44,000 yards.
- Maneuvering into position at 02:45, Sealion fired six bow torpedoes at Kongō. One minute after the salvo was launched, two of the torpedoes were seen to hit Kongō on the port side, while a third sank the destroyer Urakaze with all hands.
- The torpedoes flooded two of Kongō's boiler rooms, but she was still able to make 16 knots. By 05:00, she had slowed to 11 knots and was given permission to leave the fleet and head to Keelung in Formosa with two destroyers as escort.
- Within 15 minutes of detaching from the main force, Kongō was listing 45° and flooding uncontrollably. At 5:18, she lost all power and the order was given to abandon ship. At 5:24, while the evacuation was under way, the forward 14-inch magazine exploded, and the broken ship sank quickly, with the loss of over 1,200 of her crew.



A view taken from the aircraft carrier Zuikaku, 30 March 1942. Kongō is closest to the camera, following Haruna, Kirishima, and Hiei.

16 November 1944 - Marianas LORAN B29

- The Saipan LORAN station was ready to go on the air by 16 November, but there was at this time no other with which it could operate.
- As this station was close to the Marianas airfield which was being used by the B-29s, enemy air raids were frequent.
- During the construction period, there were several dogfights close by, and two enemy planes crashed about a thousand yards away. There was also considerable danger from falling shrapnel from the American anti-aircraft firing.



LOCATION OF THE MARIANAS LORAN STATIONS

22 November 1944 - Bougainville

- Lieut-General Savige took over command at Torokina from General Griswold of the American XIV Corps on 22nd November. The only Australian brigade then on Bougainville was the 7th which, in the previous week, had replaced the 129th and 145th American Regiments on the northern side of the perimeter, which elsewhere was still manned by American troops.
- The speed of the relief depended on the availability of ships, and many ships were then busy supporting the assault on Leyte.
- The takeover from the American force was completed in three weeks after the arrival of corps headquarters, as follows:
- 24th November: 2/8th Australian Commando Squadron relieved 164th U.S. Regiment.
- 23rd-25th November: 9th Australian Battalion relieved II/132nd U.S. Battalion.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

055642

GOODVIEW, NEW GUINEA. 1943-08-10. MAJOR-GENERAL S. G. SAVIGE INSPECTING THE AREAS OF THE 15TH AND 17TH AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BRIGADES AND THE 2/3RD AUSTRALIAN INDEPENDENT COMPANY.

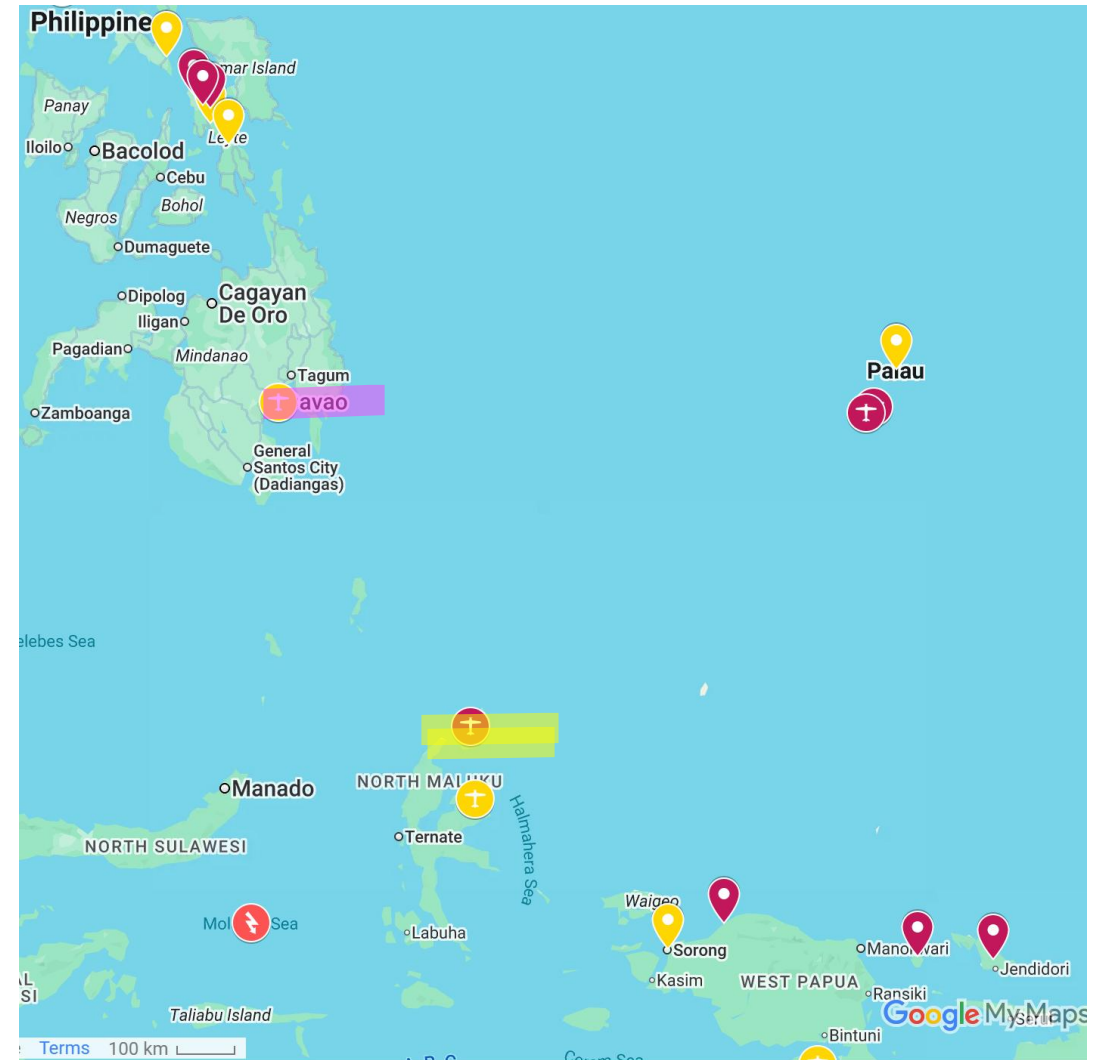
22 November 1944 - Bougainville

- The American air units hitherto in the northern Solomons were replaced by a New Zealand force—No. 1 Group under Group Captain Roberts.
- In November 1944 this was composed of two fighter squadrons armed with Corsairs.
- By January No. 84 Australian Wing (Group Captain Hely) had been added. It included No. 5 (Army Cooperation) Squadron equipped with Boomerangs and Wirraways, a detachment of No. 36 Squadron with C47s, No. 17 Air Observation Post Flight, equipped with Austers, and No. 10 Local Air Supply Unit.
- In April the New Zealand squadrons were increased to four.



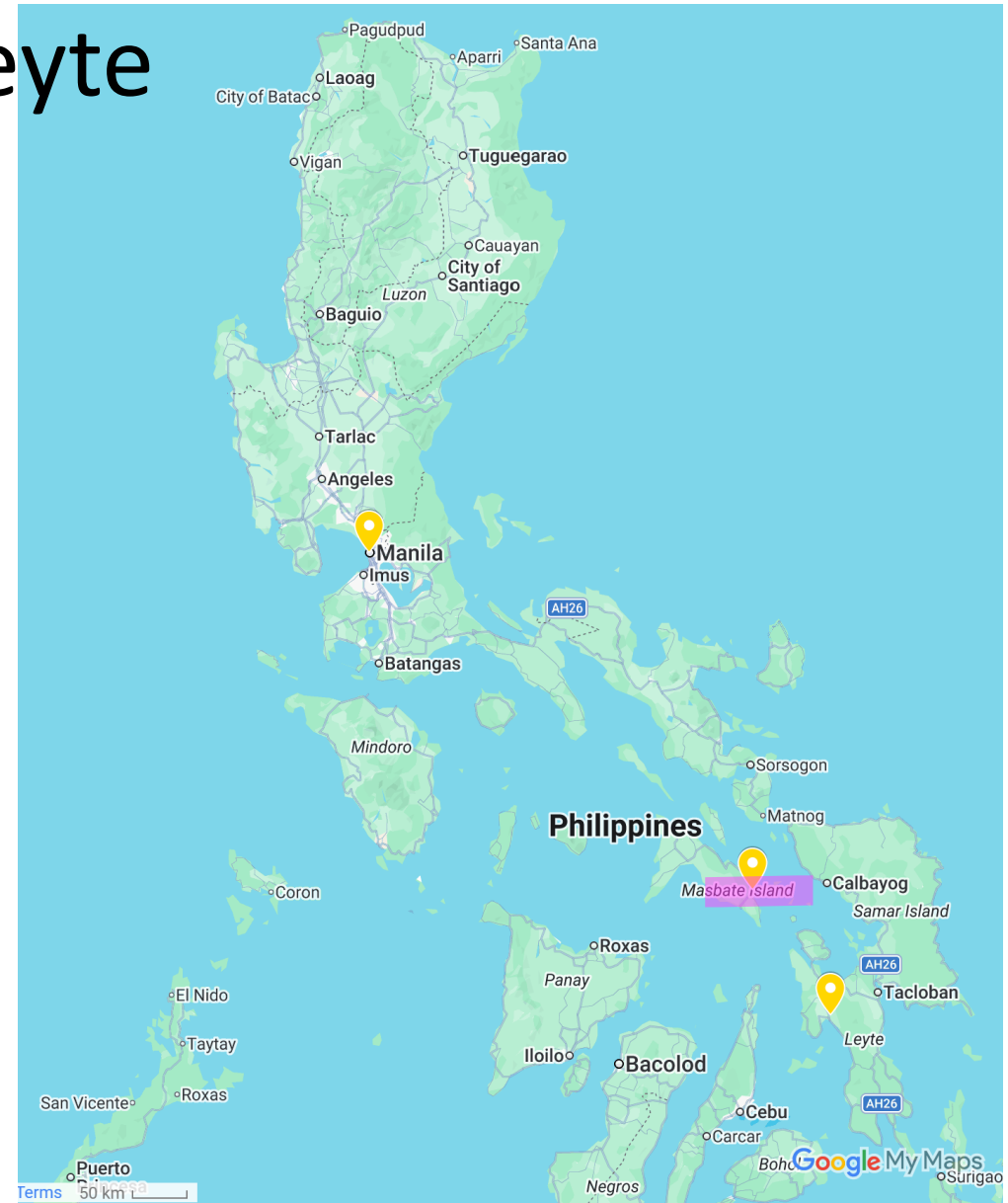
• 22 November 1944 - Morotai

- On the 22nd November, for the first time in the war, Australian aircraft struck as far north as the Philippines.
- Operating from Wama, eight Bostons attacked the Bunuwan harbour area north of Davao, Mindanao Island, the crews reported fires to 1,500 feet. Light anti-aircraft fire holed one of the Bostons.
- Eight Beaufighters of No. 30 Squadron on armed reconnaissance, strafed coastal targets in Davao Gulf, exploding and destroying one barge and probably destroying another.
- Heavy attacks on the Philippines were made at the same time by 242 American Liberators, 53 Mitchells, 121 Lightnings and 101 Thunderbolts.
- All the Australian aircraft returned safely but that night (22nd-23rd November) Japanese bombers attacked the Morotai airfields.
- One of the nine enemy aircraft was shot down but 15 Allied aircraft on the ground were destroyed and 29 damaged. Three men were killed and eight wounded. Nine RAAF Bostons of No. 22 Squadron were destroyed.



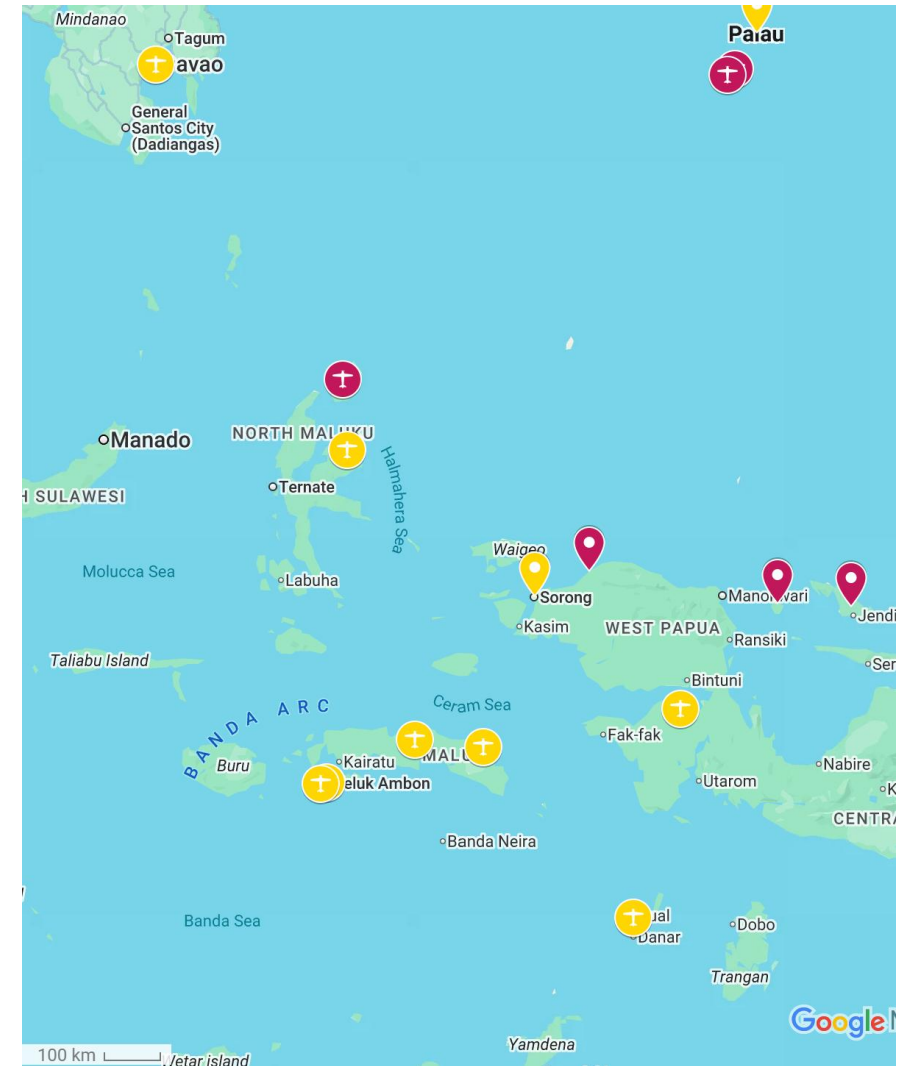
23-25 November 1944 - Leyte

- Convoy TA-5 left Manila on 23 November for **Port Cataingan** and Port Balanacan. Of the six transports, five (T-111, T-141, T-160, T-6 and T-10) were sunk by air attack.
- T-111, T-141 and T-160 on 24 November by P-40s and P-47s of the US Thirteenth Air Force.
- T-6 and T-10 on 25 November by aircraft from USS Ticonderoga



• 24/5 November 1944 - Morotai

- Two nights later more enemy raiders dropped bombs on Pitu, destroying two Beaufighters of No. 30 Squadron and damaging another ten.
- Three American aircraft were also destroyed.
- Morotai was full of aircraft and the congestion on the strips was at least partly responsible for the losses during the raids.
- No. 22 Squadron had few serviceable aircraft left after the raids and Cobby ordered it to withdraw to Noemfoor where it was to be rearmed and its crews retrained with Beaufighters.
- To counter the enemy's night raids on Morotai, the Allied Air Forces during November and December struck at all the airfields within reach which could be used by the enemy as bases for their attacks.



24 November 1944 – B29s

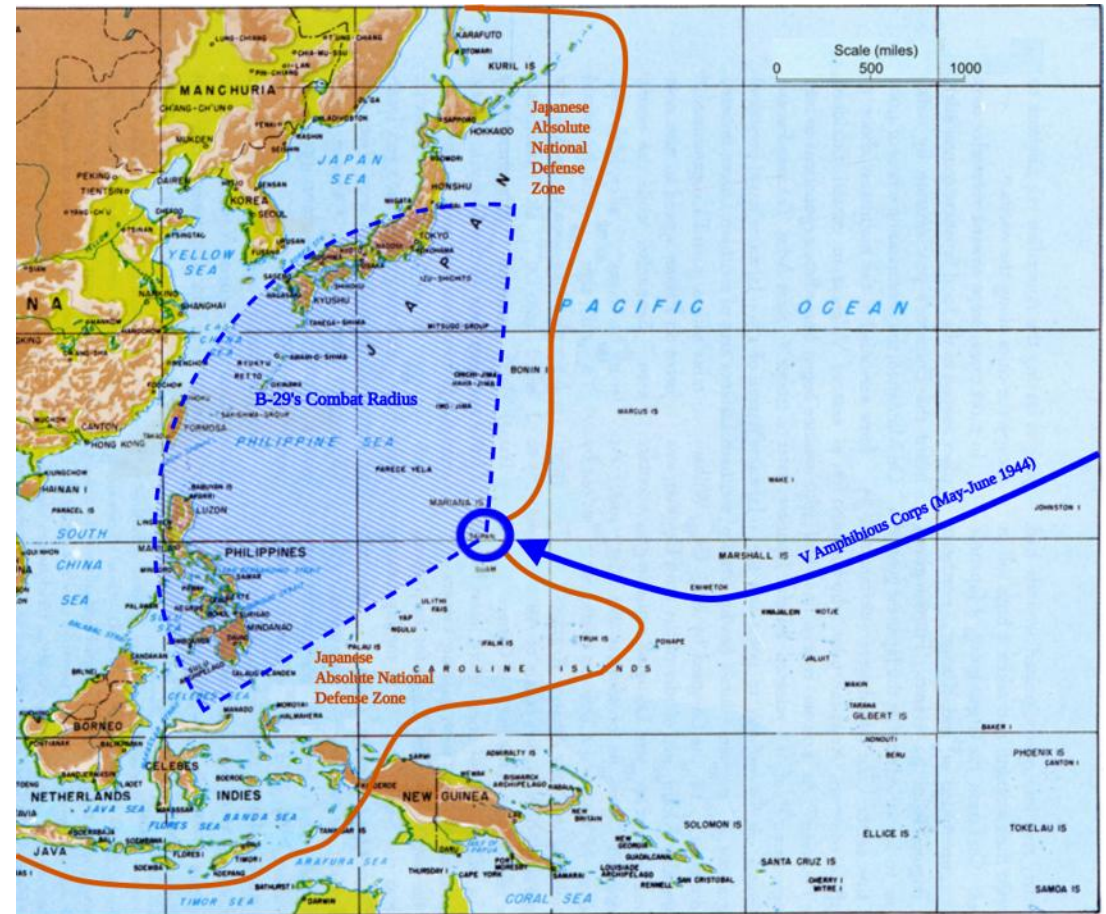
- Further F-13 sorties were conducted during early November to gather intelligence on aircraft factories and port facilities in the Tokyo–Yokosuka area.
- The F-13s were generally able to evade the heavy anti-aircraft fire they attracted and the large numbers of Japanese fighters that were scrambled to intercept them as they flew at both high speed and high altitude.



An F-13 Superfortress (may be post WW2)

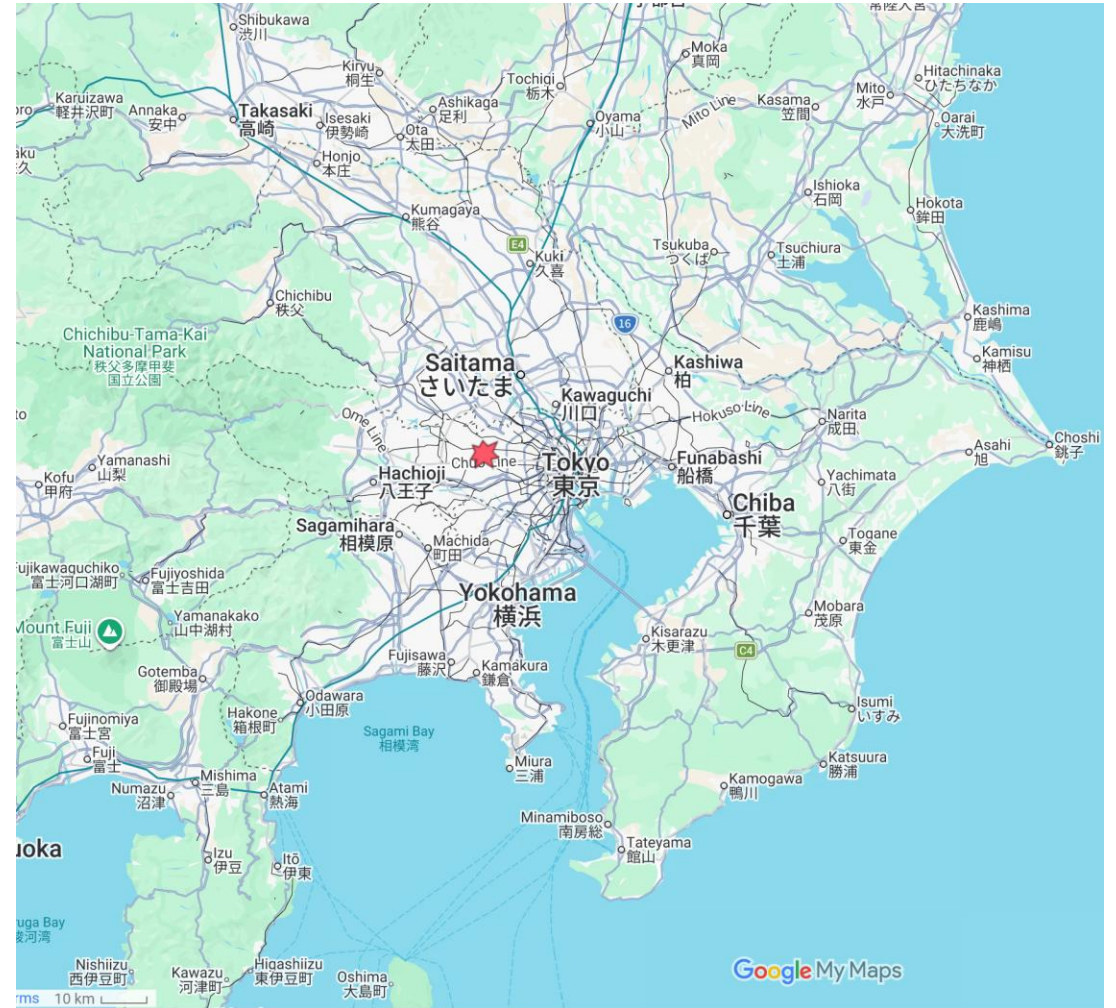
24 November 1944 - Marianas LORAN B29

- To bomb Japan it was necessary to route the flights far to the west of Tinian, due to the presence of Japanese forces in the islands of the Northern Marianas. This meant 1500 miles of open water flight, with no radio or radar check points until within 100 miles of the Japanese coast. A sun line was the only position check against dead reckoning.
- Since attacks were being conducted at extremely high altitudes, where winds up to 200 knots were encountered, accurate navigation was essential. A landfall made too far downwind meant a mission failure since the fuel supply which could be carried at these high altitudes would not permit long upwind runs.
- LORAN signals offered a means of overcoming these difficulties.



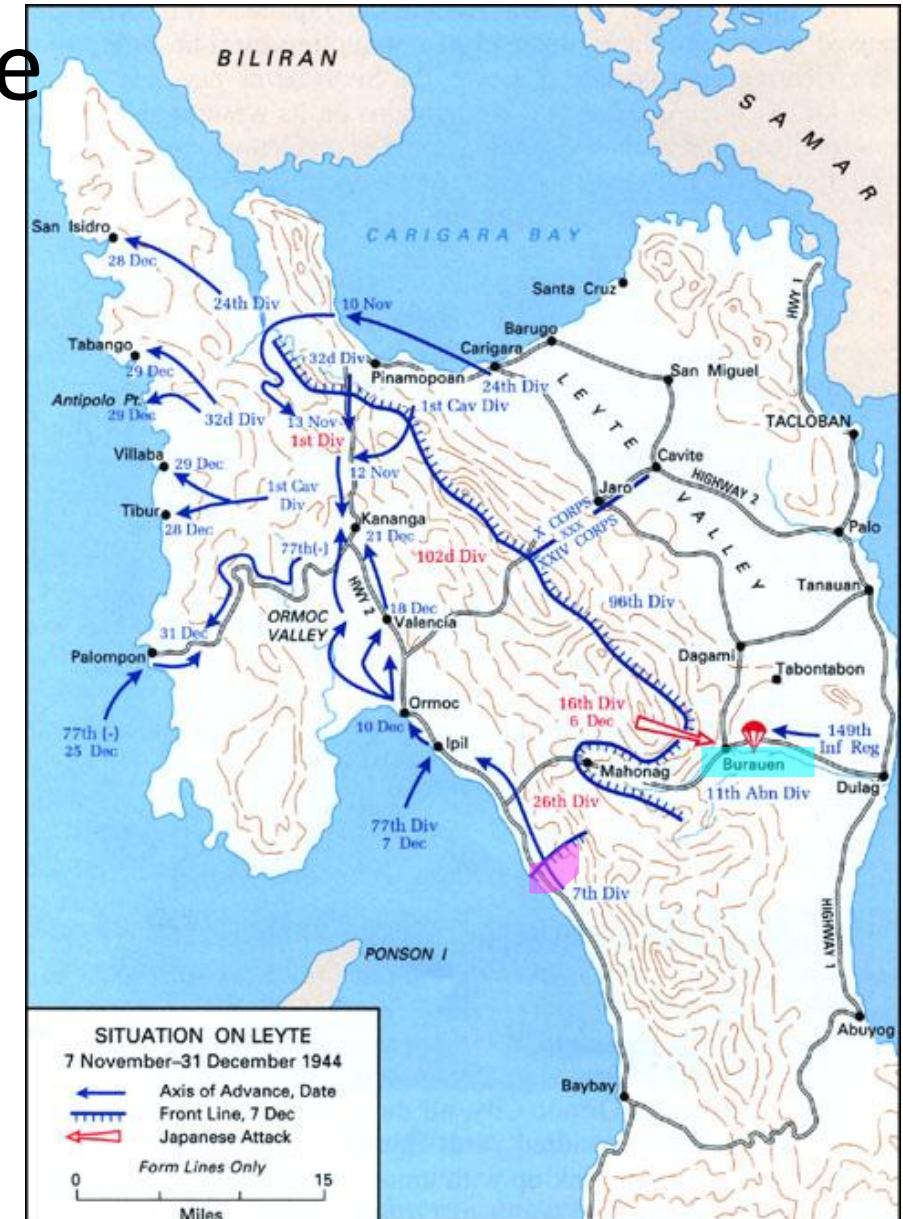
24 November 1944 – B29s

- On 24/25 November 1944 one hundred and eleven B-29s of the 21st Bomber Command bombed Tokyo, the first bombing attack on that city since the Doolittle raid in 1942.
- The first target was the Musashino aircraft plant in the outskirts of Tokyo.
- Only 24 of the 111 B-29s dispatched attacked the primary target, and the others bombed port facilities as well as industrial and urban areas.
- The Americans were intercepted by 125 Japanese fighters but only one B-29 was shot down.
- This attack caused some damage to the aircraft plant.



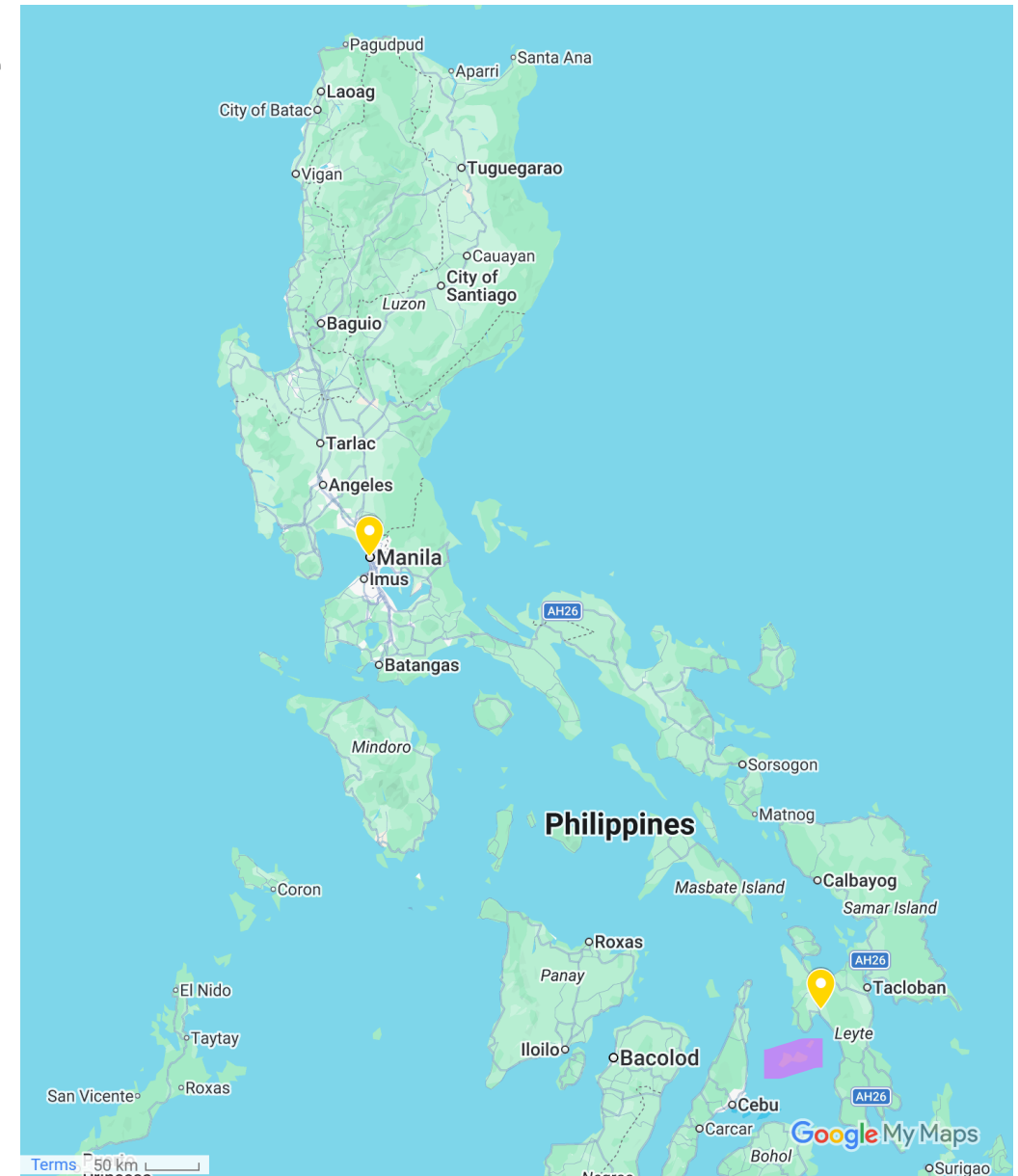
23 - 29 November 1944 - Leyte

- In mid-November XXIV Corps had the 32nd Infantry Regiment in western Leyte, and 7th Division remnants securing Burauen, but the arrival of the 11th Airborne Division on 22 November allowed Gen. Hodge to move the rest of the 7th Division to the west.
- On the night of 23 November the 32nd Infantry suddenly came under attack by the Japanese 26th Division along the Palanas River.
- The regiment's 2nd Battalion was pushed back off Hill 918 to a defensive position along the highway together with three batteries of artillery.
- Gen. Arnold earlier had placed the 2nd Battalion, 184th Infantry, as a reserve for just such a counterattack. Also, a platoon of tanks was stationed at Damulaan. Battery C, 57th Field Artillery Battalion, arrived the next day.
- The night of 24 November, Japanese attacks put four 105 mm guns out of action. The 2nd Battalion, 184th Infantry was then released by Gen. Arnold to Col. Finn.
- The defensive battle for 'Shoestring Ridge', so named to reflect the supply situation, continued until 29 November, when US troops were able to take the offensive.
- During their failed attacks of the previous days, the Japanese had committed six infantry battalions.



27 November 1944 - Leyte

- Bad weather in late November made air interdiction less effective, and the U.S. Navy began to send destroyers into Ormoc Bay.
- Canigao Channel was swept for mines by the minesweepers Pursuit and Revenge, and the four destroyers of DesRon 22 (Waller, Pringle, Renshaw and Saufley) entered the bay on 27 November, where they shelled the docks at Ormoc City.
- An Allied patrol plane radioed a message to the division reporting that a surfaced Japanese submarine was south of Pacijan Island and heading for Ormoc Bay.
- The division headed south to intercept; and, at 01:27 on 28 November, Waller's radar picked up the target just off the northeast coast of Ponson Island.
- Waller disabled I-46 with her first shots and, unable to submerge, she could only return fire with her deck guns until she sank at 01:45.



27 November 1944 – B29

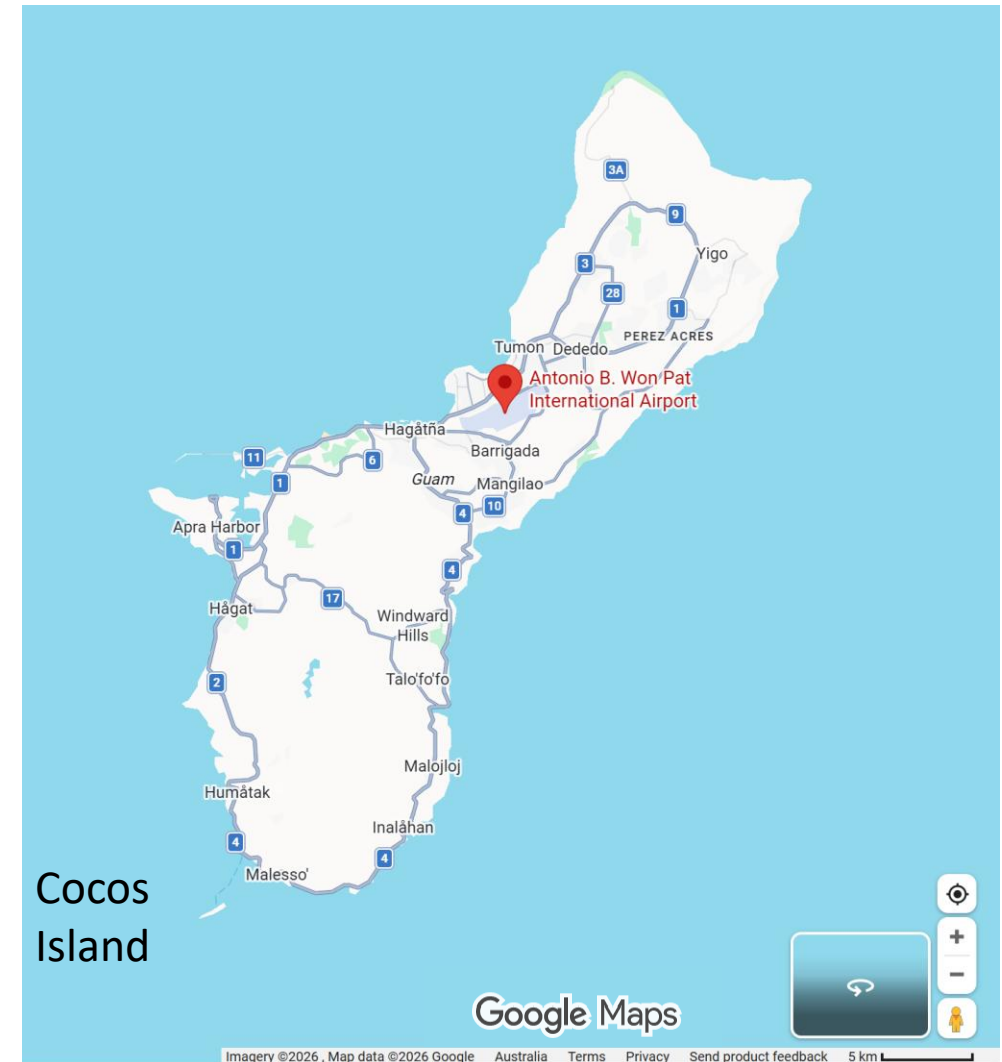
- November 27, 1944 Two G4Ms from Iwo Jima flew low over the water to evade radar and struck Isley Field on Saipan while construction lights were still on. They destroyed one B-29 and damaged 11 others.
- About 12 hours later, shortly after XXI Bomber Command's second raid on Tokyo had departed, a wave of thirteen A6M Zero fighters and reconnaissance planes strafed Isley Field.
- One of the Japanese pilots landed his fighter on Isley Field and fired on airfield personnel with his pistol until he was killed by rifle fire.
- This second attack destroyed 3 to 4 more B-29s and damaged up to 2 others, though heavy U.S. anti-aircraft fire and fighter interceptions took a severe toll on the attackers.
- Hansell was worried enough to disperse his force by sending some of his B-29's from crowded Isley to safer Guam, and to plan joint air-sea strikes at Iwo in which the Superforts might help neutralize the staging fields.



Aftermath of the Japanese attack on Isley Field,
November 27, 1944

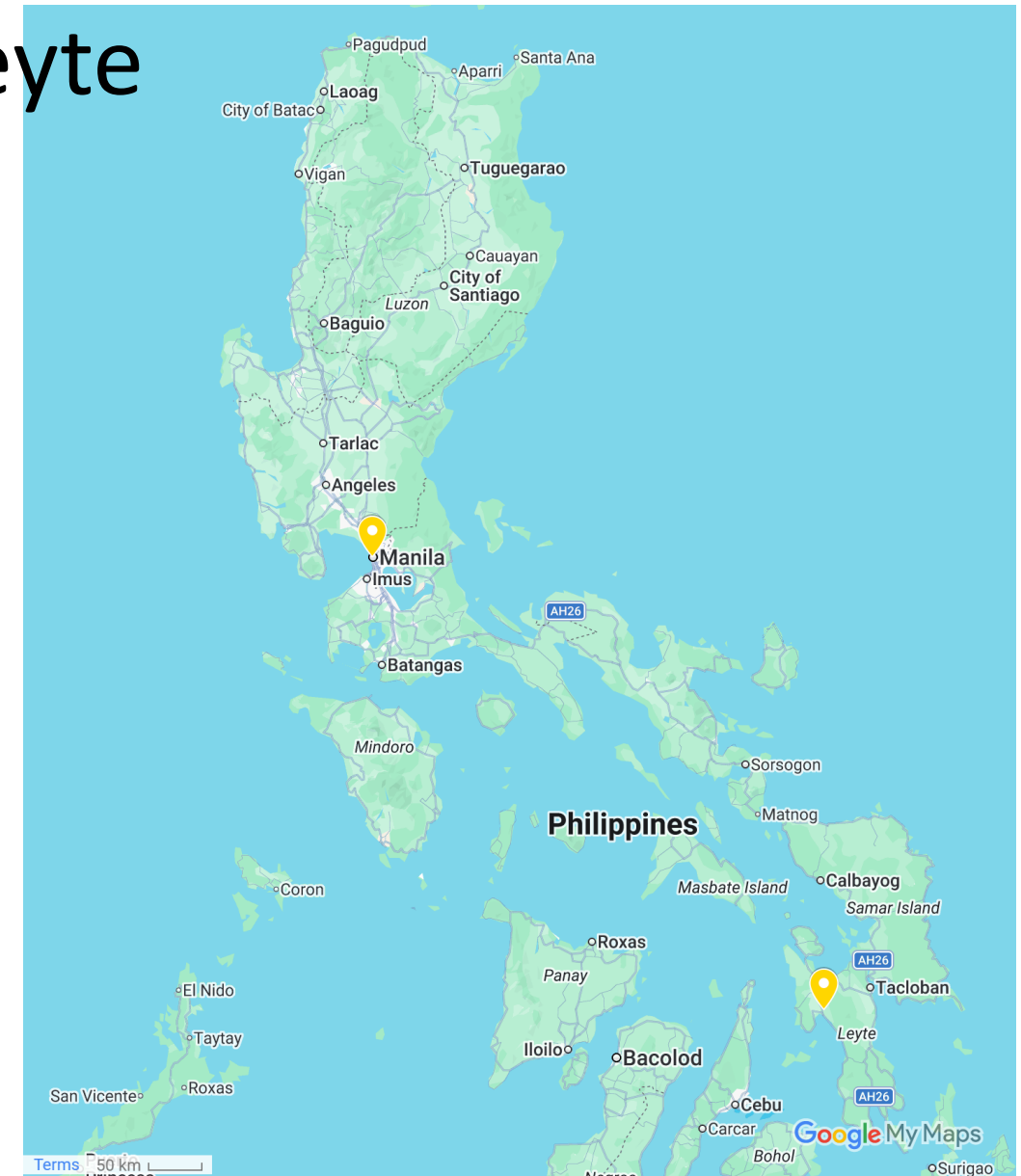
27 November 1944 - Marianas LORAN B29

- After Saipan MENKAR departed for Guam, arriving on 6 November. At Guam, or rather at the small island called Cocos Island, two miles off the south end of Guam, a double slave station was to be built. Cocos Island was 700 feet wide and approximately 2500 feet long; very low, sandy, and densely covered with tropical growth. The first difficulty encountered was the unloading, for the MENKAR had to anchor well offshore in the open sea, and the small boats had to travel approximately three miles to the landing. After an attempt to land on the north shore, where the water was shallow, a channel that would accommodate LCM"s and LCVP"s was blasted through the reefs on the south shore. This allowed the gear to be put ashore without danger of its getting wet.
- All gear was ashore by 10 November. The only loss in the procedure was one box.
- Construction of the station began early on the morning of 11 November, and the station paired with Saipan and went on the air **27 November**.
- While it was not customary to operate only two stations of a chain, without the third station, the Guam-Saipan stations provided a Loran rate which gave planes and vessels the benefit of a single line of position which could be combined with dead reckoning and which proved extremely useful.



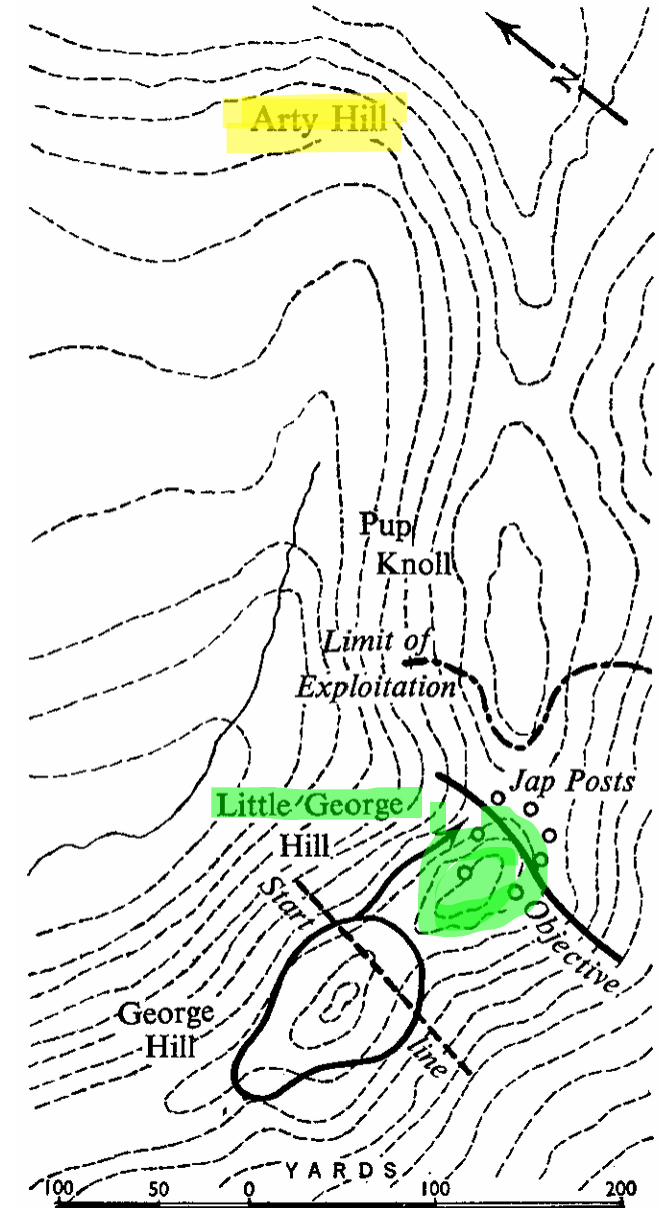
28-29 November 1944 - Leyte

- Two transports, Shinsho Maru and Shinetsu Maru, escorted by three patrol vessels, Subchasers Nos. 45 and 53 and Patrol Boat No. 105, left Manila on 27 November.
- They were attacked by American PT boats in Ormoc Bay on the night of 28 November and by air attack as the survivors left the area.
- All five ships were sunk, but not before they were able to unload most of their badly needed supplies to the troops on Leyte.
- Another U.S. destroyer sweep on the night of 29–30 November in search of a reported convoy resulted only in the destruction of a few barges.



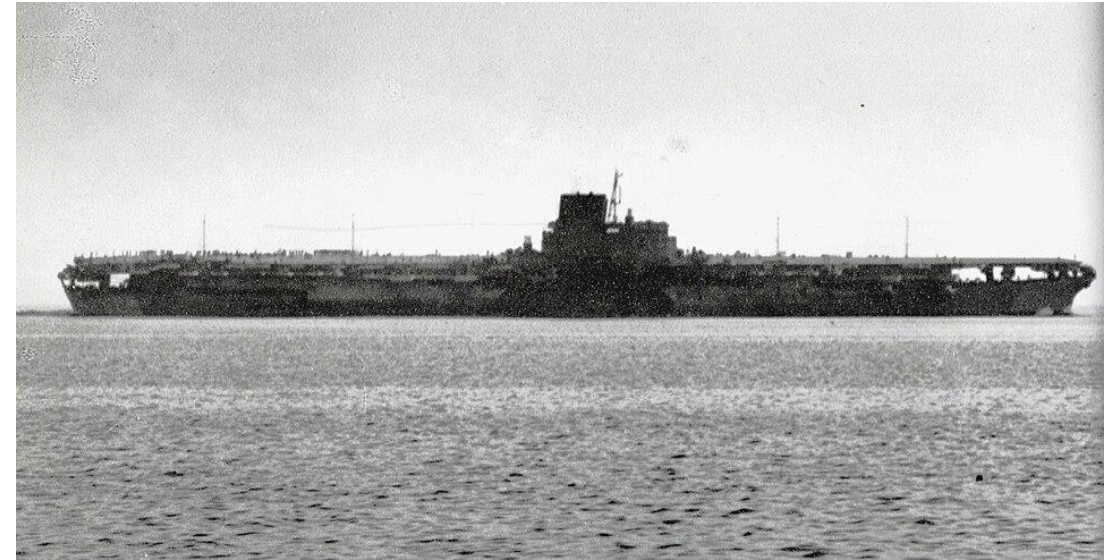
29 November 1944 - Bougainville

- On the 25th a small patrol of the 9th Battalion moved stealthily to the rear of Little George and was fired on two men being wounded.
- On the morning of the 29th the battery in the Doiabi Valley fired high-explosive and smoke shells on to Arty Hill, mortars fired smoke bombs on to Little George, and into the smoke a single platoon attacked.
- At the run the men reached the top of Little George before the Japanese emerged from shelter, opened fire with machine-guns and threw grenades.
- The attackers did not falter but worked their way forward in pairs, one man firing on a post while the other moved close and threw in grenades.
- Lieutenant Deacon, the commander, was wounded but carried on. In about half an hour the position was gained. Two Australians had been killed and six wounded, of whom three remained on duty.
- Twenty Japanese dead lay on the hill, including a lieutenant and a sergeant. The expected enemy counter-attack was made in the evening by about 40 Japanese. It was a frontal thrust and gained no ground.
- Until dawn the enemy tried in vain to infiltrate.



29 November 1944 – Japanese Waters

- The aircraft carrier Shinano was torpedoed and sunk in the Pacific Ocean 110 nautical miles (200 km) north west of Omaezaki Lighthouse (33°07'N 137°04'E) by USS Archerfish with the loss of 1,436 crew and 6 Shin'yō-class suicide motorboats.
- Laid down in May 1940 as the third of the Yamato-class battleships, Shinano's partially complete hull was ordered to be converted to an aircraft carrier following the loss of four of Japan's original six fleet carriers at the Battle of Midway in mid-1942.
- In November 1944 she was ordered to sail from the Yokosuka Naval Arsenal to Kure Naval Base to complete fitting out and transfer a load of 50 Yokosuka MXY7 Ohka rocket-propelled kamikaze flying bombs.
- She was sunk en route, 10 days after commissioning, on 29 November 1944.
- She remains the largest ship ever sunk by a submarine.



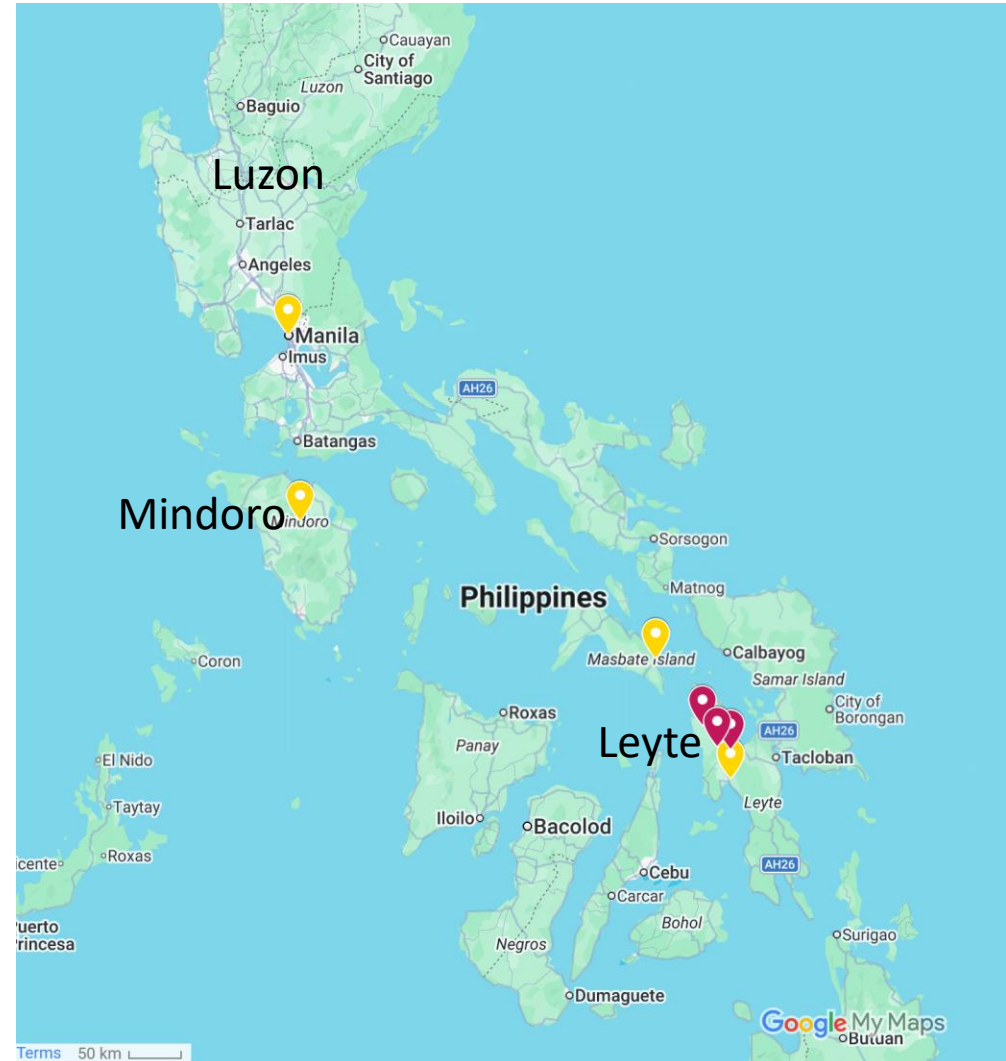
29 November 1944 - Kamikazes

- In the run-in with Japanese suicide planes off Leyte, Maryland (BB 46) is seen being hit by a kamikaze on the evening of 29 November 1944.



30 November 1944 – SW Pacific

- As a preliminary to the invasion of Luzon it had been decided to land on Mindoro, whence the Fifth American Air Force would be within easy reach of Luzon and could protect seaborne communications through the Visayas.
- The landing on Mindoro was to take place on 5th December, but on 30th November, because the airfields on Leyte were not so far advanced as had been hoped and because of the reduction of Admiral Halsey's carrier force by Japanese suicide bombers, MacArthur postponed Mindoro to 15th December and Luzon to 9th January.



November 1944 – B29

- The raids against Japan from Chinese airfields continued at relatively low intensity. Japan was bombed on:
- 25 October (59)
- 12 November (29)
- 21 November (61)
- Throughout the period, B-29 raids were also launched from China and India against many other targets throughout Southeast Asia.
- On 2 November 1944, 55 B-29s raided Bangkok's Bang Sue marshaling yards. 21 RTAF fighters attempted to intercept. RTAF Flt Lt Therdsak Worrasap attacked a B-29, damaging it, but was shot down by return fire.
- One B-29 was lost, possibly the one damaged by Flt Lt Therdsak.
- The overall effectiveness of all these attacks was disappointing, caused by an intolerable logistic situation, unfavorable weather, and early training problems with a new and untried airplane and a lack of navigation systems.



B-29 of the 16th Bombardment Group during World War II in 1944

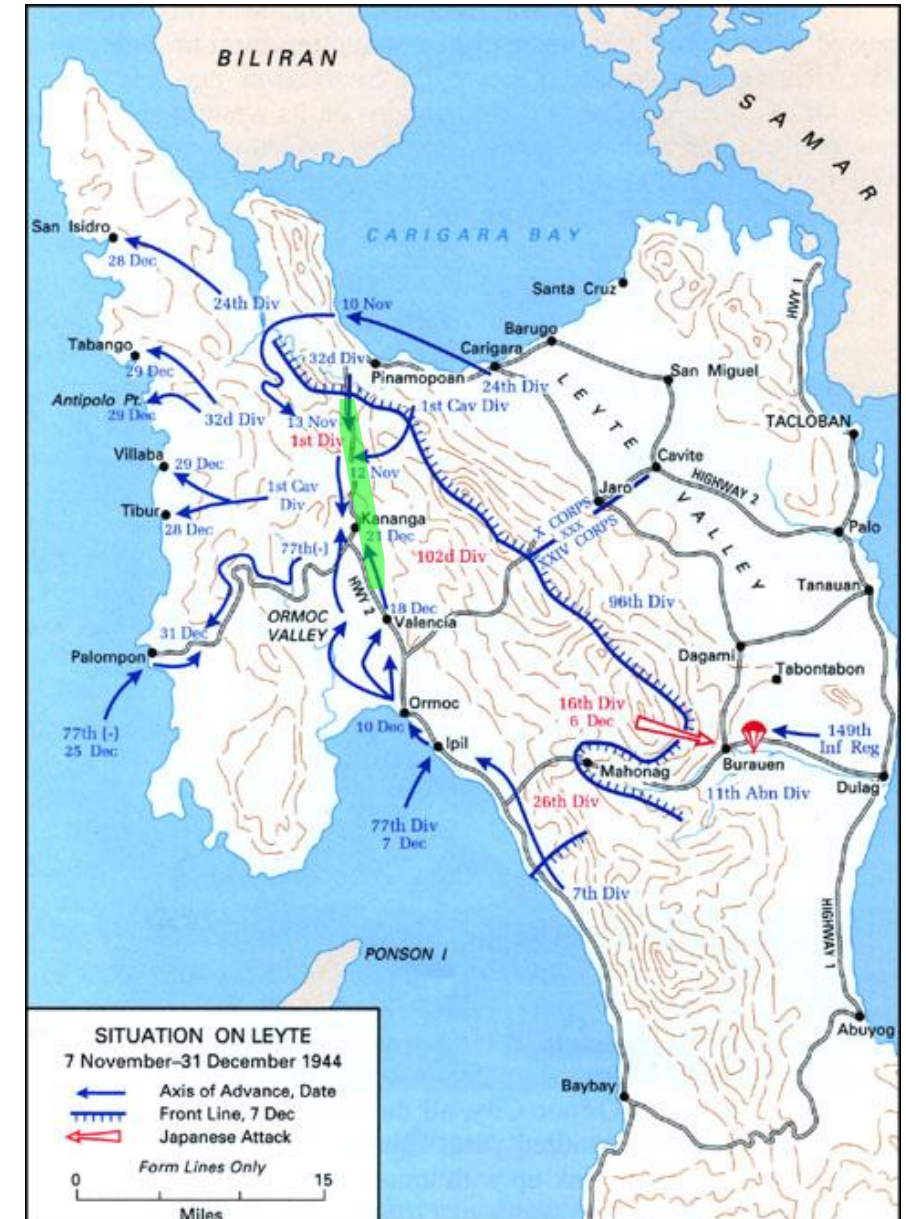
2 December 1944 – Northwestern Area

- The assault by North-Western Area aircraft on enemy shipping continued in December with considerable success.
- The major part of No. 79 Wing's effort went into attacks on shipping. It claimed the destruction of four freighters and a total of 25 smaller vessels.
- 79 Wing was now reinforced by the return to the area of No. 13 Squadron, newly-equipped with Ventura aircraft (photo RAF Ventura over Ijmuiden).
- Liberators of No. 24 Squadron also attacked shipping. They had some success on 2nd December when they found a small enemy convoy in Macassar Strait. The first bomb dropped scored a direct hit on a small freighter and it sank in one minute.
- The enemy, desperately short of shipping as a result of US submarine operations was busy building wooden vessels. Charlesworth was sending out frequent strikes against enemy shipyards in the Celebes as well as ships at sea.



2 - 19 December 1944 - Leyte

- It was not until **14 December** that the 32nd Division finally cleared the Breakneck–Kilay Ridge area and linked up with the 1st Cavalry Division on **19 Dec**, placing the most heavily defended portions of **Highway 2** between Carigara Bay and the Ormoc Valley under X Corps control.



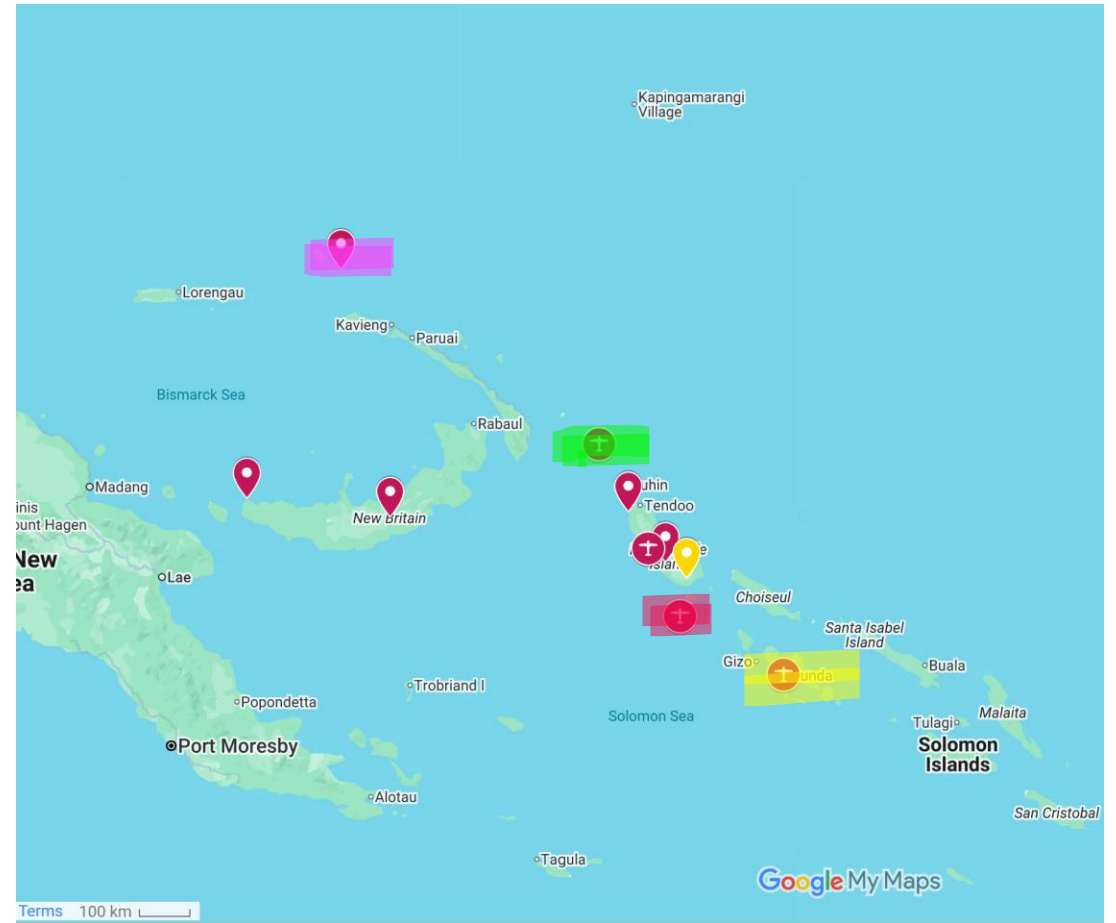
3 December 1944 – B29

- The Musashino aircraft plant was attacked on 27 November and 3 December and was only lightly damaged as high winds and clouds prevented accurate bombing.
- A raid against an industrial area using M-69 incendiary cluster bombs, specifically developed to damage Japanese urban areas, conducted on the night of 29/30 November by twenty-nine Superfortresses burnt out one-tenth of a square mile, and was also judged to be unsuccessful by the Twentieth Air Force's headquarters.
- Photo: Brigadier General Haywood Hansell posing with a map of the Tokyo region during November 1944.



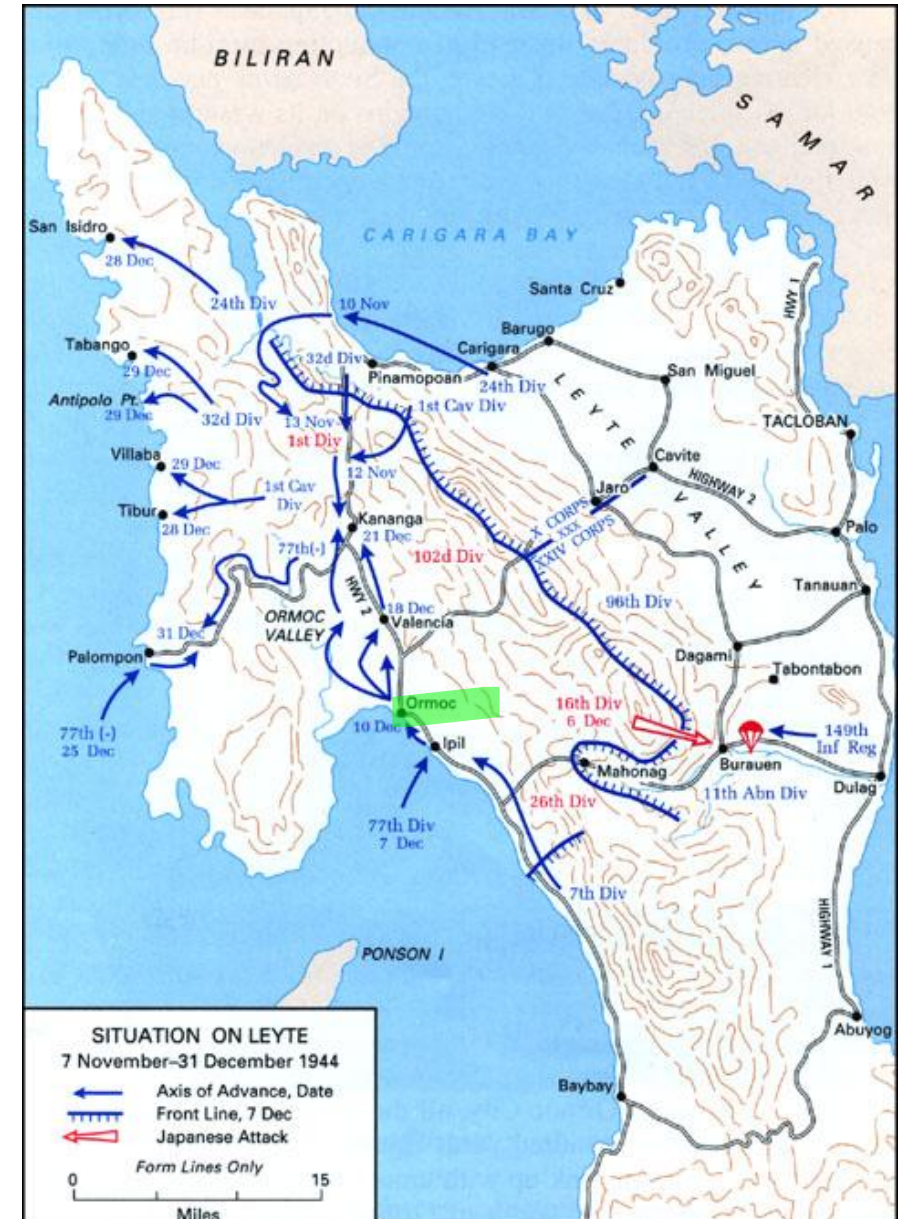
3 December 1944 – New Guinea

- Brigadier A. W. Potts' 23rd Brigade relieved the Americans on the Green Islands, Emirau, Mono and Munda.
- Savige, GOC II Corps, in his weekly letter to Sturdee, GOC 1st Army, on 3rd December wrote:
- “Potts with 23rd Bde is very restless, and he has all manner of plans to attack and eliminate the Japanese from Choiseul—the Shortlands—to Buka. etc.
- I have had to be very definite and firm with him to ensure that he does not embark on any . . . adventures, which would undoubtedly land him and me in trouble.
- I have issued orders to him that he is not to permit any unit, sub-unit, or individual to move from the islands without my authority.”



4 – 12 December 1944 - Leyte

- Gen. Arnold began his advance toward Ormoc with a novel tactic.
- On the night of **4 December**, vehicles of the 776th Amphibian Tank Battalion put to sea and leapfrogged south along the Leyte coast and positioned themselves west of Balogo.
- On 5 Dec, the tanks moved to within 200 yd of the shore and fired into the hills in front of the advancing 17th and 184th Infantry.
- This tactic greatly disorganized the defenders, except where ground troops encountered enemy pockets on reverse slopes inland, shielded from the offshore tank fire.
- The 7th Division pushed north with two regiments which encountered heavy enemy fire coming from Hill 918, from which the entire coast to Ormoc City could be observed.
- By **8 Dec**, the American forces had taken Hills 918, 380 and 606, plus the surrounding ridges.
- By **12 December**, Gen. Arnold's lead battalion was less than 10 mi south of **Ormoc City**.



4 – 12 December 1944 - Bougainville

- From 4th-10th December the 29th Australian Brigade relieved the 182nd U.S. Regiment and I/132nd U.S. Battalion.
- From 11th-12th December 11th Australian Brigade relieved 148th U.S. Regiment.
- The Fiji Infantry Regiment, was also posted to Bougainville.



General Sturdee, GOC First Army, has enemy positions on Bougainville explained to him on the map by Brigadier H.H. Hammer, 15 Infantry Brigade, watched by Major General Bridgeford, GOC 3 Division & Lieutenant General Savige, GOC II Corps.

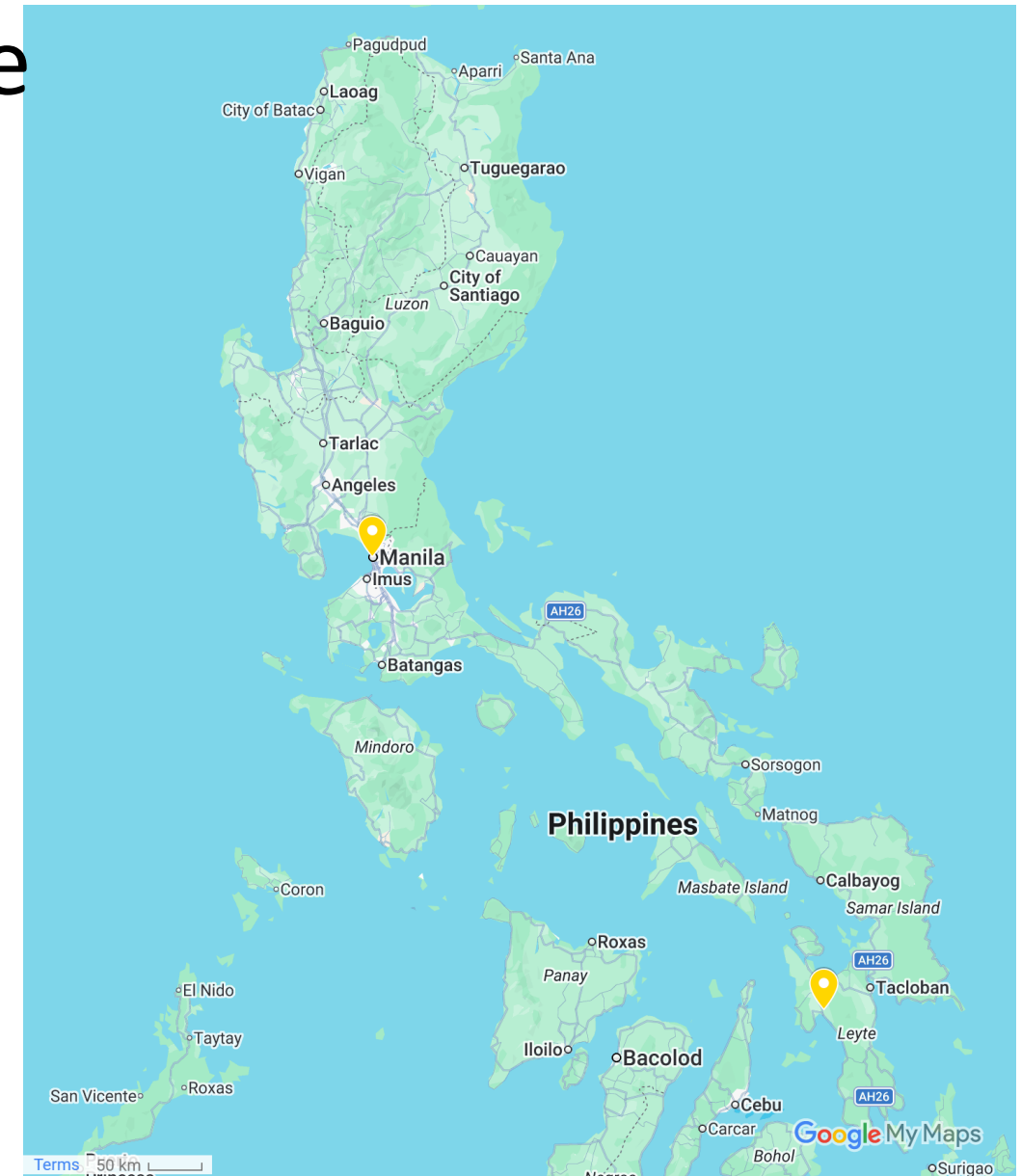
December 1944 – US Armies

- **In September** a new American army—the Eighth, under Lieut-General Robert L. Eichelberger—had been created.
- **In December** the Sixth Army (nine divisions) was on Leyte and the Eighth mainly in Dutch New Guinea.
- Photo: General Sir Thomas Blamey And Lieutenant General R.L. Eichelberger. 14 January 1943.



3-4 December 1944 - Leyte

- A convoy of three transports departed Manila on 1 December, escorted by destroyers Take and Kuwa under the command of Lieutenant Commander Masamichi Yamashita. Two groups of transport submarines also took part in the operation.
- The convoy was docked at Ormoc City when it was engaged at 00:09 on 3 December by three ships of U.S. DesDiv 120 (Allen M. Sumner, Cooper and Moale).
- The U.S. ships sank the transports as they were unloading but came under heavy attack from Yokosuka P1Y "Frances" bombers, shore batteries, submarines that were known to be in the harbor, and the Japanese destroyers.
- Kuwa was sunk and Commander Yamashita was killed. Take attacked and hit Cooper with torpedoes and escaped, though with some damage.
- Cooper sank at about 00:15 with the loss of 191 lives (168 sailors were rescued on 4 December by Catalinas).
- At 00:33, the two surviving U.S. destroyers were ordered to leave the bay, and the victorious Japanese successfully resupplied Ormoc Bay once more.



4 December 1944 - Marianas LORAN B29

- After landing the construction material at Cocos Island, the MENKAR was ordered to Apra harbor, 15 miles away on the west side of the island of Guam.
- She arrived on 11 November, just three months after Japanese resistance on Guam had ended.
- The materials for the construction of the monitor station which was to be constructed on the island were gotten ashore, through the terrific wreckage remaining from the naval and air bombardment.
- The cargo was trucked the 30-miles to the Loran site on Point Ritidian, at the very northern end of Guam.
- On 4 December this station was operating and monitored the rate then on the air. At this time there were an estimated 400 to 500 Japanese soldiers still at large on Guam. Several times at night the guards shot at prowlers but none were captured or killed.



USS MENKAR - COAST GUARD MANNED LORAN SHIP

5 December 1945 - Leyte

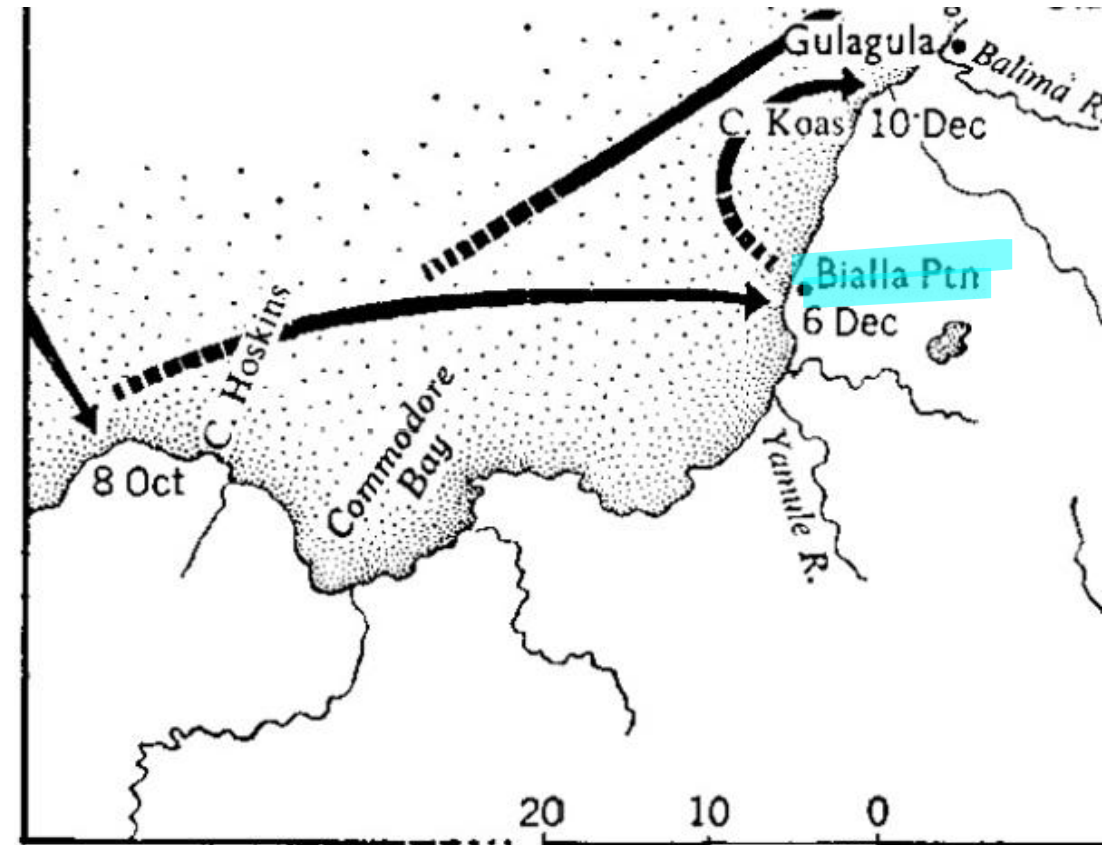
- On 5 December the landing ship medium, USS LSM-20, was sunk in the Philippine Sea off Leyte, Philippines by a Japanese kamikaze aircraft attack.
- Five sailors were killed and another nine were wounded.
- Survivors were rescued by the destroyer USS Flusser.



USS LSM-20

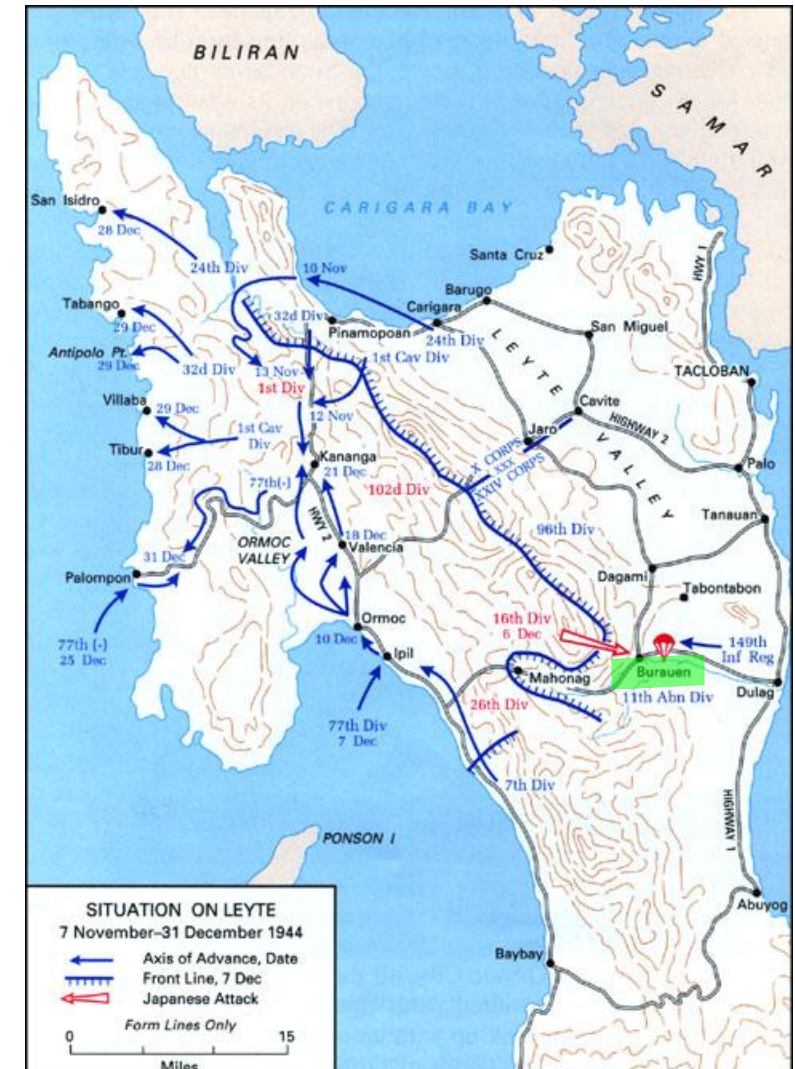
6 December 1944 – New Britain

- Due to limited shipping resources, the transfer of the 5th Division to New Britain was delayed significantly and was not completed in 1944.
- The larger Japanese force still remained largely static around the Rabaul fortress, with only about 1,600 troops deployed in the forward areas.
- In early December, the Australian advance began with the goal of moving along the northern and southern coasts towards the Gazelle Peninsula to capture a line between Wide Bay and Open Bay, along which to contain the Japanese forces.
- This saw a series of amphibious landings, river crossings and small-scale actions.
- The 36th Infantry Battalion began expanding their foothold around Cape Hoskins on 6 December pushing forward towards Bialla by barge, where two companies established a forward base from where they began patrolling east.
- After establishing that the Japanese had withdrawn behind the Pandi River, a new base was established around Ea Ea, with the troops again being moved forward by barge.



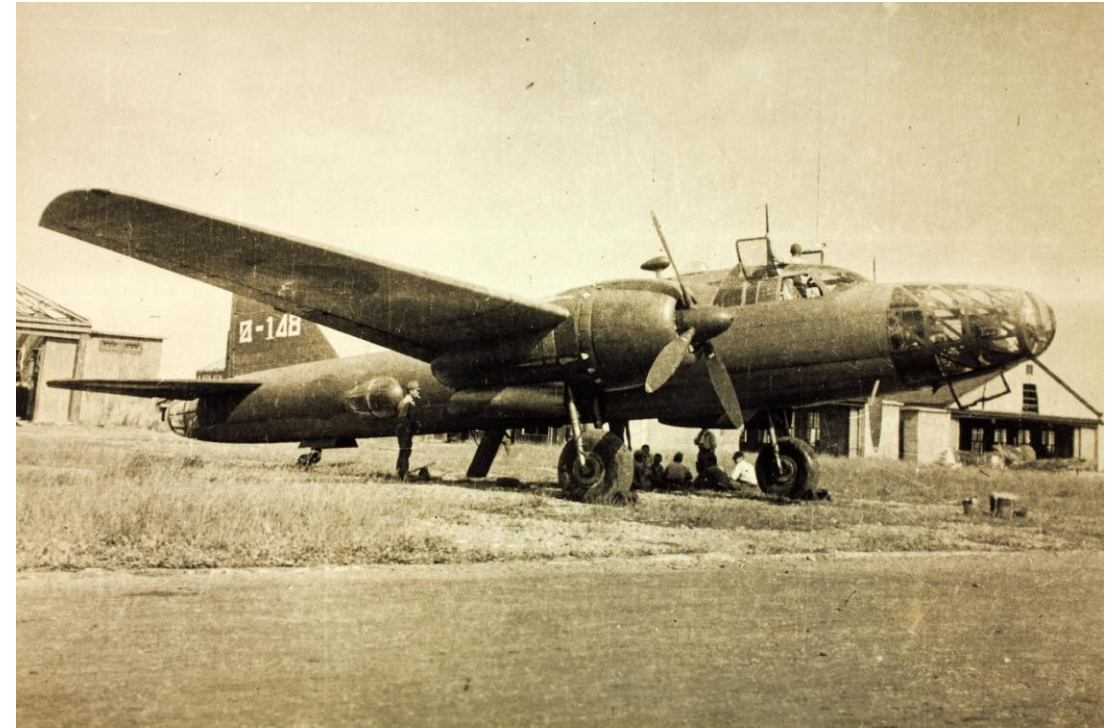
6 – 9 December 1944 - Leyte

- On 6 December, the Japanese made a surprise attack on the Buri Airfield with the 16th Division, combined with 250 paratroopers.
- At the time, the 11th Airborne Division, commanded by General Joseph M. Swing defended the Burauen area. The Japanese aimed to recapture eastern Leyte airstrips and use them for their own planes.
- Descending Japanese paratroopers were "cut to shreds by the antiaircraft and field artillery units," according to one American artillery officer.
- Although poorly coordinated—only one battalion of the Japanese 26th Infantry Division reached the battlefield—the enemy attack yielded the seizure of some abandoned weapons which they managed to use against the Americans over the next four days.
- The 11th Airborne Division, supported by the 149th Infantry, 38th Infantry Division, and the 382nd Infantry, 96th Infantry Division, plus hastily mustered groups of support and service troops, eventually contained the attack, and turned the tide by 9 Dec.
- With a few American supply dumps and aircraft on the ground destroyed and construction projects delayed, the enemy attacks on the airfields failed to have any effect on the overall Leyte Campaign.
- Gen. Suzuki ordered a retreat so he could deal with the American landing at Ormoc, but with only 200 men returning, the 16th Division ceased to exist.



7 December 1944 – B29

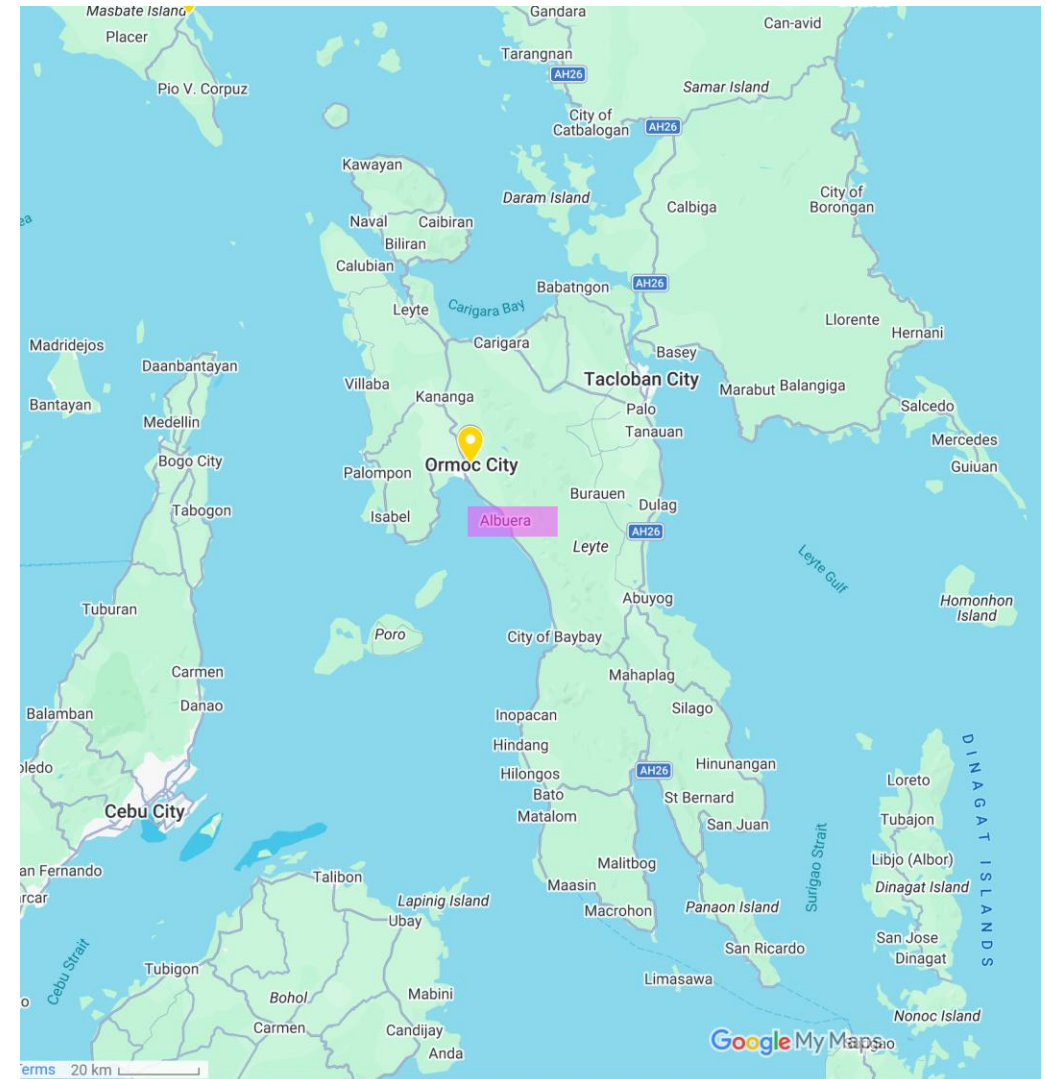
- On December 7, Japanese aircraft, which included G4Ms and Ki-67s, conducted a simultaneous attack on Saipan from high and low altitudes which destroyed three B-29s and damaged another 23.
- Japanese losses were heavy, however, with six out of eight Ki-67s of the 110th Sentai lost during this attack, the first carried out by this unit.



Mitsubishi Ki-67 “Hiryu”. Allied reporting name “Peggy”

7 December 1944 - Leyte

- On 7 December the 77th Infantry Division, made an amphibious landing at **Albuera**, 3.5 miles south of Ormoc City.
- The 305th, 306th, and 307th Infantry Regiments came ashore unopposed, but the destroyers Ward and Mahan were hit by kamikazes.



7 December 1944

- One of my heroes of Pearl Harbor was William Outerbridge.
- That morning many others all over the Pacific and Far East were failing to react to or even recognise the threat even after the bombs started exploding.
- Lt Cdr Outerbridge, two days after taking command of USS Ward, his first command, on a clear calm quiet winter Sunday morning in Hawaii saw a submarine, opened fire, sank it and transmitted a clear concise report to his command.
- These were the first shots of the war in the Pacific
- For his action at Pearl Harbour Outerbridge was awarded the Navy Cross.

CAPTAIN WILLIAM WOODWARD OUTERBRIDGE, USN,
Commanding Officer

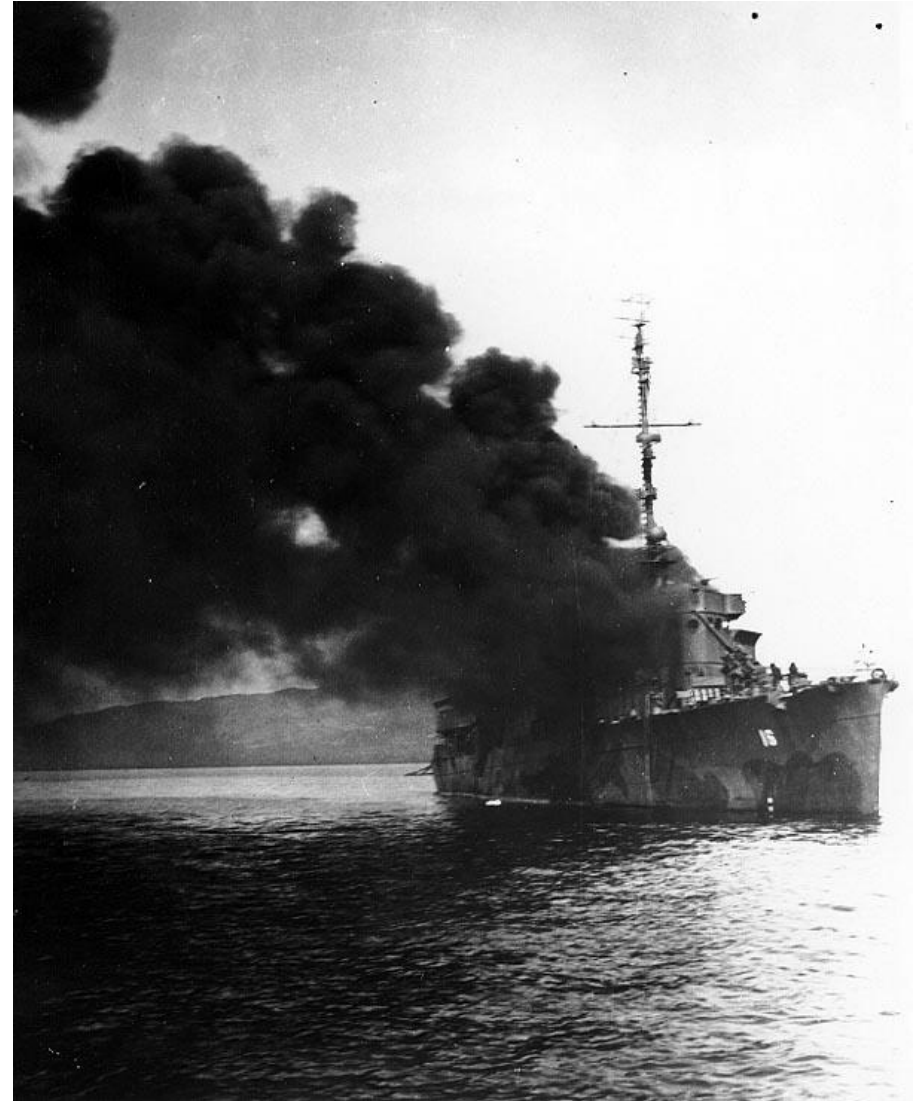


Post war photo.

7 December 1944

- In 1942, USS Ward was sent to the West Coast for conversion to a high-speed transport. In February 1943 she returned to the Pacific.
- After a posting ashore in Washington Outerbridge was given command of the destroyer O'Brien in June 1944.
- After action off the coast of Normandy on D Day Outerbridge and the O'Brien were reassigned to the Pacific Fleet to participate in the liberation of the Philippines.
- During 1944, Ward had taken part in amphibious landings on Saidor, Nissan Island, Emirau, Aitape, Biak, Cape Sansapor, and Morotai.
- In late 1944, she landed troops on Philippine beaches.
- In December while patrolling off Ormoc Bay, Leyte, Ward came under attack by several Japanese kamikazes. One bomber hit her hull amidships, bringing her to a dead stop.
- The resulting fires could not be controlled and Ward's crew was ordered to abandon ship.
- On December 7, 1944, three years to the day after their action at Pearl Harbor, Outerbridge, in O'Brien, was ordered to sink his old ship, the Ward.

Jerry McBrien 2026



Ward, after being hit by a kamikaze

