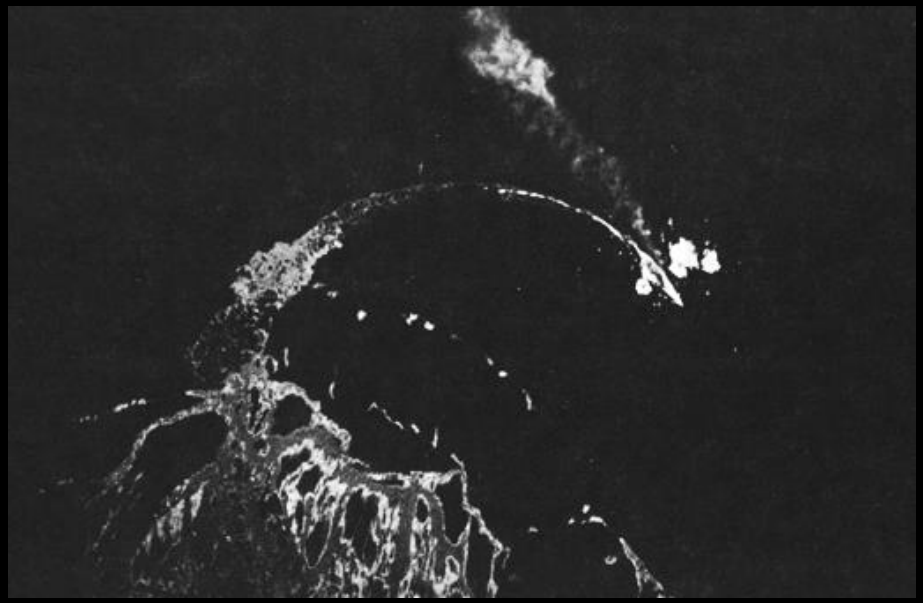
THE PACIFIC WAR

THE NAVAL BATTLE OF GUADALCANAL



USS Portland was crippled and barely floating. USS San Francisco – the flagship – was able to move under its own power but the bridge was a gaping hole and all its guns were knocked out.

USS Atlanta and four destroyers were sunk and another crippled.

USS Juneau had its back broken and it was uncertain whether it would make port before it sank.

The Japanese were not unscathed. The battleship Hiei was a wreck and had no steering. One destroyer had sunk and several were damaged.

Admirals Callaghan and Scott and most of their staffs were dead.

THE NAVAL BATTLE OF GUADALCANAL

Dawn brought out the bombers from Henderson and Enterprise to the south. They sank the crippled Hiei.

The survivors of the U.S. force that could steam away did – making for Espiritu Santo at best speed which was far less than their normal speed.

During the transit, the Japanese submarine I-26 fired a spread of torpedoes hitting USS Juneau. Its magazines exploded blowing the ship apart. Maybe 100 of its 697 crew survived the blast. No one saw survivors and the ships continued on.

Eight days later, ten survivors were rescued. Among those who died, all five of the Sullivan brothers. (One survived the blast but not the intervening days.)

THE NAVAL BATTLE OF GUADALCANAL

On the night of the 13th of November, four Japanese heavy cruisers with two light cruisers and six destroyers bombarded Henderson Field (coincidently the night Halsey was there with Admiral Nimitz, RADM Spruance – Nimitz's Chief of Staff – and Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox.)

The Japanese did little damage.

The next day the retiring bombardment force was attacked by bombers from Enterprise and Henderson. One cruiser was sunk and another heavily damaged.

The planes also found the transports, sinking seven of eleven.

During the day, the Japanese ordered their surviving battleship to try again. The U.S. sent two battleships…

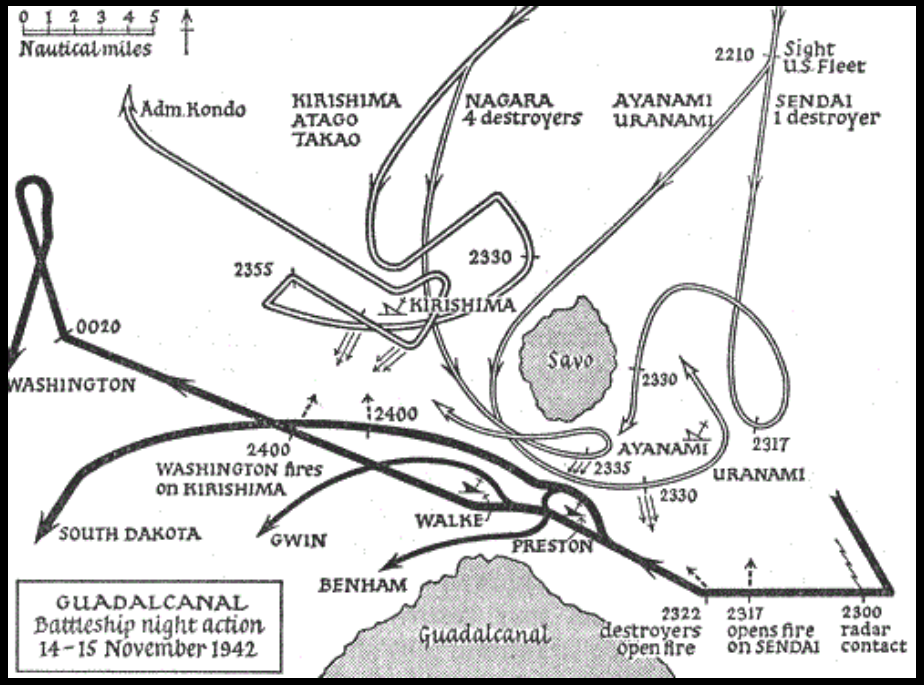
THE NAVAL BATTLE OF GUADALCANAL

Commanding the U.S. battleship force was RADM Willis "Ching" Lee. He got his nickname in part because his last name sounded Chinese and because he spent time studying things Asian. A 1908 graduate of the Naval Academy, he was the most accomplished U.S. Olympian before Marc Spitz winning 5 gold, a silver and a bronze in the 1920 Olympics in rifle events – and without glasses, he was practically blind at a distance.

Unsurprisingly, by 1942 he was the Navy's expert on shipboard gunnery, fire control and radar. He enjoyed doing complex mathematics in his head for fun.

Lee was not a true member of the Navy "Gun Club" as he saw aviation was the future. But while too blind to fly, he could shoot and saw to it the ships under his command could shoot as well just in case there was a gun fight in the future…

THE NAVAL BATTLE OF GUADALCANAL



On the night of November 14th, the Japanese tried to continue. It sent Kirishima with two heavy cruisers, two light cruisers and nine destroyers to bombard Henderson Field.

Stalking then were the American battleships Washington and South Dakota with four destroyers.

It would be the first of only two gun fights between battleships in the Pacific War.

South Dakota could only fire six of its main guns (due to damage from the Battle of Santa Cruz) and had to withdraw when a hit knocked out power to its guns.

Washington riddled the Kirishima, sinking it and damaged a cruiser.

THE NAVAL BATTLE OF GUADALCANAL

The U.S. lost two destroyers and the Japanese one.

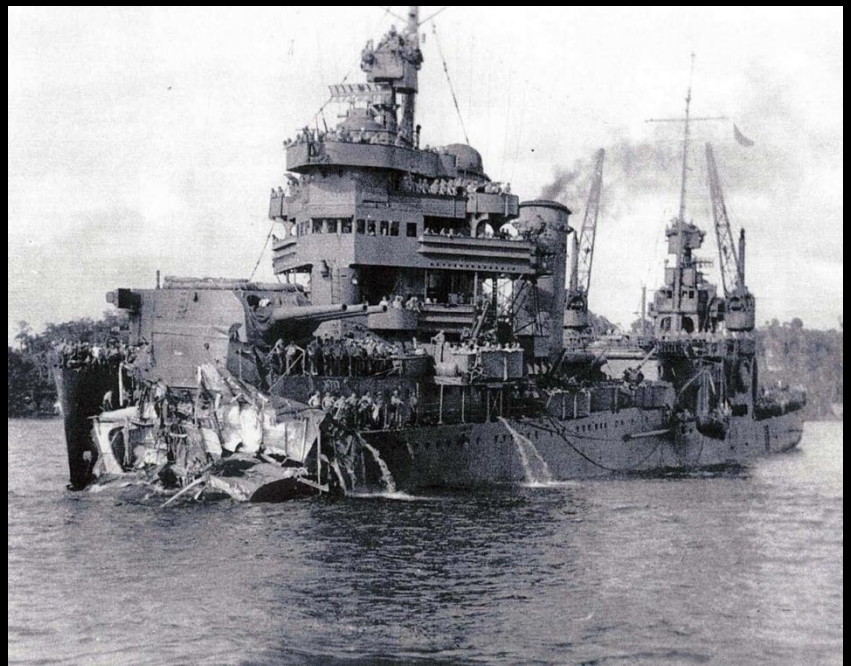
Until that November night, the South Pacific was contested waters and neither the U.S. nor Japan truly controlled. After that night, Japan lost control over the seas and rarely managed to contest it.

After the firing stopped and the warships went their separate ways, the four surviving Japanese transports beached themselves on Guadalcanal.

About 3,000 soldiers disembarked before the American planes found them and wrecked them.

They lost all their supplies and all the food meant for the Army on Guadalcanal.

BATTLE OF TASSAFARONGA



The Japanese would continue to try and supply its Army for another month. The U.S. Navy would try to stop them.

On November 30th, a U.S. force of four heavy cruisers, a light cruiser and six destroyers set out to stop the Tokyo Express run of eight destroyers.

They did not take into account Japanese torpedoes.

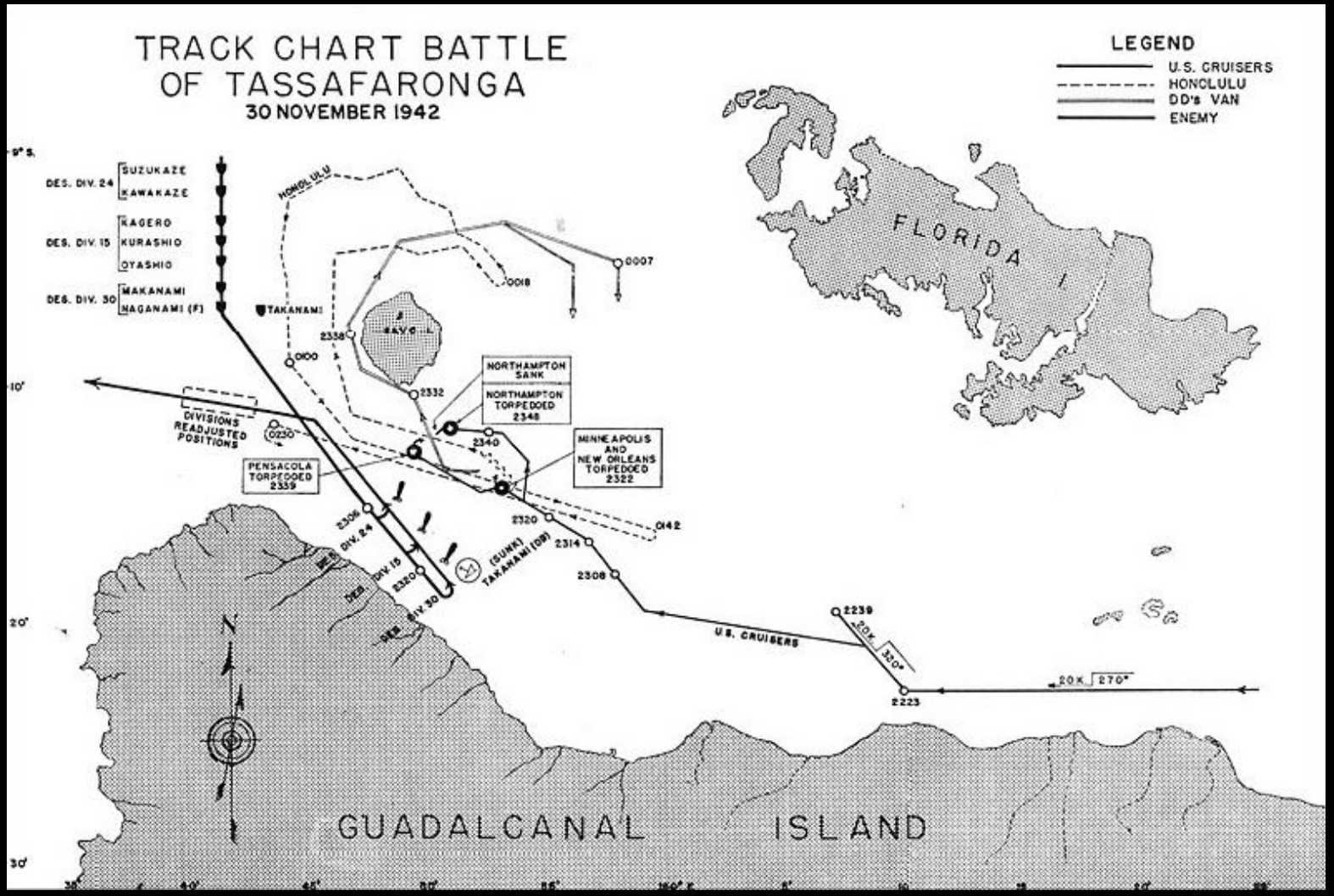
USS Northampton was sunk.

USS Pensacola, USS New Orleans and USS Minneapolis were crippled – the latter two having their bows blown off.

The Japanese lost a destroyer.

But they also failed to deliver their supplies.

BATTLE OF TASSAFARONGA



ENDGAME

On December 16th, 1942, the 132nd Infantry Regiment of the Americal Division landed on Guadalcanal as part of XIV Corps to relieve the 1st Marine Division.

Illinois had joined the war in the Pacific. The 132nd was one of five Illinois National Guard infantry regiments that would serve in the Pacific during the war. It was also the only one that had not spent months training to fight in North Africa.

ENDGAME

The 132nd arrived in Ft. Lewis WA in December 1941. It was meant to be the first regiment of the 33rd Infantry Division, then slated for future operations in North Africa – still almost a year away.

On January 14th, 1942, it embarked on transports. It arrived in Australia on February 27th as part of the U.S. promise to defend the country from the Japanese. But it barely had time to get used to the place before it was again on ships heading for New Caledonia. On May 24th, it and two other National Guard regiments – one from Massachusetts and one from North Dakota – were formed into the Americal division. Its name reflected its formation – an American infantry division that formed and trained in New Caledonia.

The 132nd would see action at the tail end of the Guadalcanal campaign as well as in Bougainville and the Philippines.

The 123rd and 130th Infantry Regiments formed up in 1942 and trained for North Africa as part of the 33rd Infantry Division. The Division was then sent to Hawaii and would spend almost a year training and guarding the beaches. The Division would then be sent to New Guinea and would fight there and in the Philippines before being sent to Japan as part of the Army of Occupation.

ENDGAME

The 129th was also supposed to be a part of the 33rd Infantry Division but was detached and assigned to the 37th Infantry Division for the invasion of Bougainville. It would be on Bougainville for about a year before moving on to fight in the Philippines.

The 131st was never a part of a division as a whole unit. It was sent to Guadalcanal in 1943 to guard the gear and train other units. The Regimental HQ, its artillery and 2nd Battalion would serve for a time in combat with the 41st Infantry Division in New Guinea. It would be joined by the rest of the regiment to guard Hollandia, HQ and main supply base of 8th Army.

The only other Illinois regiment to see service in WWII was the 106th Cavalry. It was originally trained as a tank destroyer unit but was changed to a reconnaissance unit. It was never part of a division, being assigned missions by its corps commander.

The 106th landed in Normandy on June 27th, 1944 as part of VIII Corps, 1st Army.

On August 1st it transferred to XV Corps, as part of the newly formed 3rd Army under LGEN Patton but would not be there long. In early September it was transferred to Southern France and 7th Army. It would serve with 7th Army until the end of the war.

ENDGAME

On December 19th, 1942, the last units of the 1st Marine Division left Guadalcanal.

They had been replaced by XIV Corps consisting of the 2nd Marine Division and the U.S. Army Americal Division and 25th Infantry Division under the command of LGEN Alexander Patch.

The Campaign was not quite over but for all intents and purposes it was.

The Japanese would not attack again. With the exception of a surrounded Japanese garrison at a place called the Gifu, the fighting was limited to patrol actions.

The first Marine Division had suffered 650 KIA, 1,278 wounded, 31 MIA and 8,580 cases of malaria.

ENDGAME

By January 5th, 1942, neither the Japanese Navy nor Army believed they could win at Guadalcanal and the decision was made to evacuate.

The Japanese evacuated what was left of its Army by destroyer between February 1st and February 7th, 1943. 10,652 men were taken off.

Over 26,000 others were not so fortunate. About 1,000 had been taken prisoner.

The rest were dead. Mostly they died from disease and starvation. (~8,500 were KIA).

General Patch, finding no one left to fight, declared the island secured on February 9th.

ENDGAME

The USS Saratoga returned to the South Pacific on Dec 13th, 1942.

The USS Enterprise would remain in the South Pacific until May 1943 despite still needing to repair its forward aircraft elevator.

The U.S. Navy had lost:

2 Aircraft Carriers,
6 Heavy Cruisers,
2 Light Cruisers, and
14 Destroyers.

5,041 sailors were KIA or MIA.

The Japanese had lost:

1 Light Carrier,
2 Battleships,
3 Heavy Cruisers,
1 Light Cruiser, and
11 Destroyers.

About 6,000 sailors were KIA or MIA.

OPERATION SHERWOOD FOREST

The lack of carriers in the Pacific was a concern to the Navy. Enterprise was in desperate need of repair but they could not afford to let it go.

At the Casablanca Conference in January 1943, they convinced the Royal Navy to loan them a carrier.

There seemed to be some need to keep it secret so the whole thing was titled "Operations Sherwood Forest."

HMS Victorious was designated and became "USS Robin". Its crew remained Royal Navy but it would need to be modified to handle a U.S. Navy carrier air wing and, more critically, to be able to refuel at sea,

The refit was done in Norfolk. Publically the ship was being repaired.

OPERATION SHERWOOD FOREST

“USS Robin” arrived at Pearl Harbor in late March 1943. There it took on its American air wing and prepared for war in the South Pacific.

On May 17th, 1943, it arrived in the South Pacific expecting to be there for up to three months. (It had passed Enterprise on the way south).

It saw little action.

While its planes supported ground operations from the Solomon Sea, the Japanese never came out to play.

After 28 days it was recalled. No one knew why until they reached Pearl Harbor.

OPERATION SHERWOOD FOREST

When “USS Robin” arrived at Pearl Harbor in June of 1943, there were six brand new carriers in port. Her services were no longer essential.

THE COST – IRON BOTTOM SOUND

POSTSCRIPT

Admiral Callaghan and Scott were posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. In the 1980's USS Callaghan (DDG-994) and USS Scott (DDG-995) were named in their honor. The ships were two of four modified Spruance class destroyers originally built for Iran but confiscated when Ayatollah Khomeini came to power.

The other two ships of the class were named for RADM Kidd killed in USS Arizona and USS Chandler named after RADM Chandler who died in a Kamikaze attack in January 1945.

During their years in service, the four ships were known alternately as the "Ayatollah Class" and the "Dead Admiral" Class.

POSTSCRIPT

The five Sullivan brothers who died when the USS Juneau was sunk have had two destroyers named for them. USS The Sullivans (DD-537) (1943-1965) is now a museum in Buffalo NY. USS The Sullivans (DDG-68) (above) is an Arleigh Burke Class guided missile destroyer assigned to the Atlantic Fleet.

USA vs. JAPAN

“Before Guadalcanal, the Japanese advanced at their pleasure. After Guadalcanal, they retreated at ours.”

Bill Halsey

Yamamoto knew it was unlikely that Japan could win a war of attrition with the United States which was why he planned the pre-emptive strike at Pearl Harbor.

Strategically he hoped it would prevent a counter-attack of any significance for at least six months to a year and a counter-offensive for a year to eighteen months.

If Japan achieved its goals before the U.S. could reply, perhaps a negotiated settlement could be reached.

The U.S. counterattacked within two months.

It launched its first counter-offensives within eight months.

All before the weight of its industry could truly be brought to bear.

THE CASABLANCA CONFERENCE
12 – 24 January, 1943

Conference was called to discuss war the strategy and goals. British wanted to avoid any cross-channel invasion yet have U.S. devote most its effort into European War.

U.S. insisted upon invading France but would concede it was not possible before the spring of 1944 due to logistics. They would agree to invade Sicily and Italy provided there would be an invasion of France in 1944 (with or without the Brits).

Moreover, they forced the British to accept an increased diversion of effort into the Pacific Theater with no counter augmentation in the Atlantic from 20% of the U.S. effort to 35%. (In terms of total resources it would be greater than that, but there was no need to tell the Brits that.)

At the time, about 450,000 U.S. Army Soldiers were in the Pacific; 370,000 in Britain and North Africa.

This did not include all but one aircraft carrier and the bulk of the U.S. Navy which were earmarked for the Pacific, most of the naval construction nor all of the Marines.

THE OTHER SHOESTRING

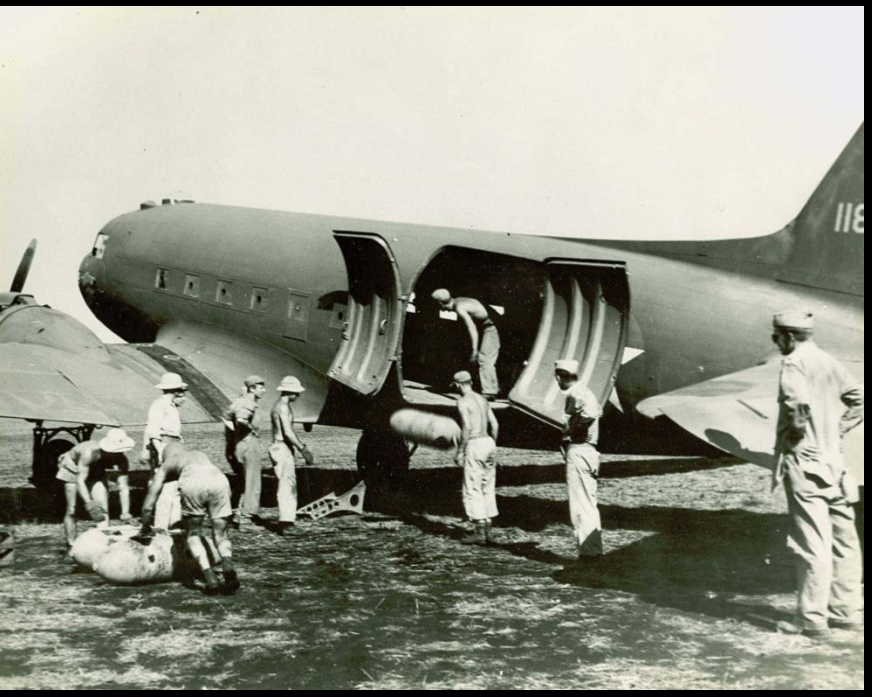
In July of 1942, MacArthur finally had enough. His Air Forces commander MGEN Brett – he who only had excuses – was let go. MacArthur was allowed a choice of officers to replace him, and considering Jimmy Doolittle was one of the names, it was not a bad list.

He chose George Kenney. MacArthur knew air power would be critical in this war but also felt most air officers lacked … imagination. (Brett certainly had).

Kenny had that in spades. The worst he may have told his new boss is we can't do it this minute but give us a day or so.

It was Kenny who suggested that Port Moresby could be supplied and reinforced entirely by air – at least until the naval situation turned in favor of the allies. He had been on the job less than two weeks…

THE OTHER SHOESTRING



Over the course of the war, MacArthur's forces would conduct 87 amphibious landings beginning at Milne Bay, New Guinea in August of 1942 through the Philippines and Borneo in late 1944 and 1945.

But it would also move divisions and their supplies by air to newly made airfields. It only ever had one Airborne division, but many American and Australians were air landed – brought in by planes.

As were jeeps, trucks, heavy artillery and even bombs for the bombers (above).

The airlift was initially a matter of expedience as shipping was both lacking and vulnerable. But even when ships were plentiful, MacArthur's soldiers flew to the sound of guns as often as they sailed.

THE OTHER SHOESTRING

In Europe, the U.S. air forces stuck with pre-war doctrine. Kenny dispensed with it. High altitude precision bombing was only high altitude bombing. To hit – especially with a small number of planes – low altitude produced results.

Fifth Air Force perfected low altitude bombing by medium and heavy bombers much to the chagrin of the Japanese…

THE OTHER SHOESTRING

While the Casablanca Conference had allocated more resources to the Pacific, they did not arrive quickly.

With the Japanese evacuation, Guadalcanal became a rear area and the troops enjoyed somewhat improved conditions.

Malaria, however, was still a problem.

The island became a major supply base to support future operations in the Solomons but the supplies took time to arrive so for the first several months there were only some minor operations to secure islands that were not held by the Japanese.

The major operations had to wait…

THE OTHER SHOESTRING

The Air War was not as quiet.

The Japanese were convinced they could bomb the Americans out of the Solomons (and New Guinea).

But the raids did little real damage. Guadalcanal had more fighters than before and better ones. The Japanese told Tokyo their raids were brilliant successes.

In reality, they lost scores of planes against a mere handful for the Americans and damaged one ship, not the score or more they told Tokyo had been sunk.

Meanwhile, their main base at Rabaul was being bombed frequently by bombers from New Guinea and Guadalcanal.

The Japanese planned to repeat their "success"…

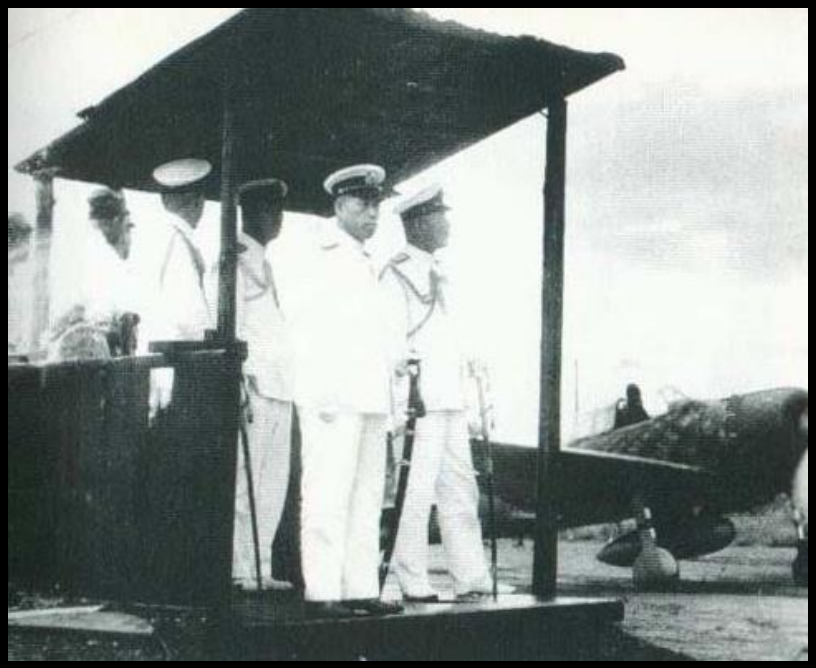
DEATH OF A LEGEND

The Japanese planned a major air offensive in April 1943. In preparation, Admiral Yamamoto was to visit the air bases at Rabaul and on the island of Bougainville to the south. His schedule was detailed, down to the minute and sent out on JN-25.

It was decoded in its entirety almost immediately in Hawaii. CAPT Edwin Layton – who considered Yamamoto a personal friend – told Nimitz and recommended a mission to kill the admiral on his trip to Bougainville.

It was possible … barely. No carriers were nearby or would be but Army fighters from Guadalcanal might make it if the Admiral was as punctual as was his habit.

The idea was sent to Washington. Roosevelt approved the mission within hours.

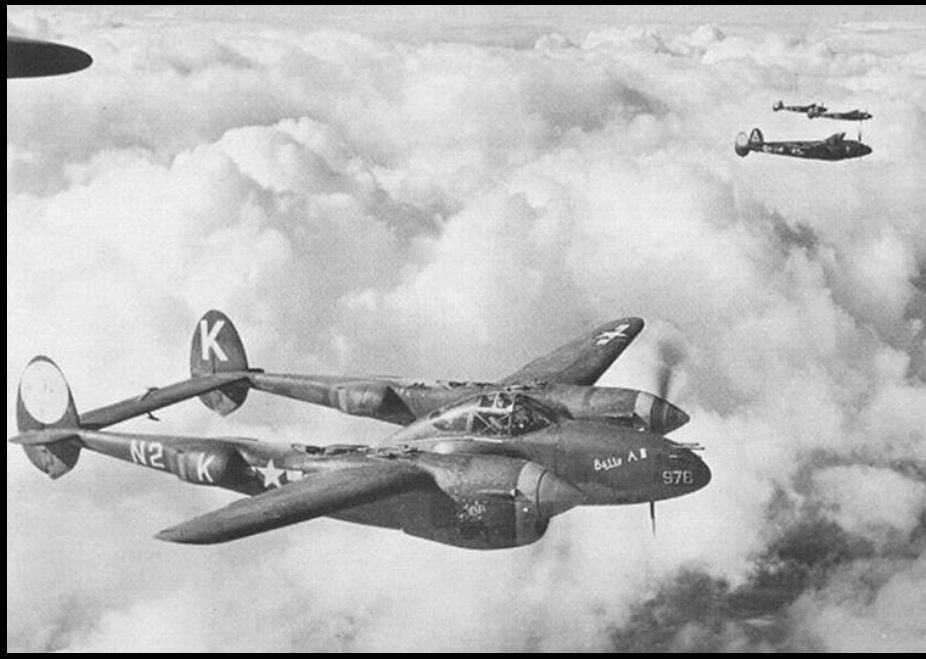


DEATH OF A LEGEND

The mission was assigned to the 339th Fighter Squadron. They flew the P-38 Lightning which was the preferred Army fighter in the South Pacific.

With drop tanks, which were a new development, they could make it to intercept the Admiral's plane and its escorts but they would not have much time to wait around.

Admiral Yamamoto was to land at Buin on the south coast of Bougainville at around 10:00 AM April 18th, 1943. The plan was to intercept his flight about thirty miles out, take out any escorts and then take out the bombers. There were two G4M "Betty" bombers, one would have the Admiral.



Timing had to be perfect as the P-38's could only wait around 10 minutes…

DEATH OF A LEGEND

The mission might not have been possible at all were it not for Charles Lindbergh (and not because he "flew the ocean blue.")

And others who looked the other way.

In 1940 Lindbergh was a LTC in the Army Air Corps Reserve. He was also a pain in the government's neck. He had been a leader in the America First movement – a very loud anti-war, isolationist movement believed to be pro-Nazi.

When Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, Lindbergh went to the Army to be called to active duty. He was discharged instead and given a IV-F code – ineligible for military service due to "physical, mental or moral defect" (i.e. liking the wrong people.)

DEATH OF A LEGEND

But Henry Ford was not the military and was sort of in the airplane business (Ford made a handful of models) and about to go in on a major scale. (Ford Motor company would build over 8,000 B-24's.)

He needed an aviation expert and hired Lindbergh as a contractor. By 1943, Lindbergh was acting as a consultant to other aviation companies as well working to improve the performance of their aircraft.

While he had yet to work on the Lockheed P-38, he had done work on superchargers (which the P-38 used) and in developing drop tanks for fighters and carrier aircraft.

Both of these improvements made the mission possible…

DEATH OF A LEGEND

Lindbergh would sneak into the Pacific as a contractor under an assumed name later in the Spring of 1944. The local commanders knew who he was (as did anyone who met him) and what he was doing but pretended he was not there.

He first worked with the Marines on improvements to the F4U Corsair's performance.

He would then work with the Army on the P-38's.

Officially, he never flew and certainly never flew in combat.

Unofficially, he was a crack shot with guns and bombs, had six air-to-air victories and flew over 80 combat sorties for the Marines and Air Corp. He was sent home late 1944.

DEATH OF A LEGEND

On April 18th, 1943, the 399th Fighter Squadron took off from Guadalcanal.

The fight they were sent to intercept arrived over Bougainville exactly when predicted and the P-38's were waiting.

They fought off the six Zeros flying escort and shot up the two Betty's before having to return to base. One Betty crashed into the jungle. The other made it to Buin heavily damaged.

It was not until May 15th, 1943 that the Americans knew the result of the mission. On that day Yamamoto's ashes were returned to Japan, a national day of mourning.

He had been in the co-pilot seat of the plane that had crashed. He was shot through the chest … dead before impact.

STRATEGY IN THE PACIFIC

The Pacific War was unlike any war ever fought before.

It was one dominated by immense, empty regions of water that were always more a no man's land (or sea) than under any one side's absolute control.

There was no traditional "front." Armies moved, but not in a steady advance unbroken from point to point.

This was a war of control over a "Battle Space" – air, land and sea.

Land was important but only insofar as it led to control over the surrounding Battle Space. Taking ground for the sake of taking ground alone achieved little and often at unacceptable costs in time, manpower and resources.

STRATEGY IN THE PACIFIC

Both sides had been contemplating a Pacific War for decades. Neither side had ever fought one.

1942 had been a year of rapid gains by the Japanese but at little true cost to the United States. Aside from the Philippines, nothing of any importance was lost to Japan.

It was a classic case of trading space for time.

The counter offensive beginning in August 1942 at Guadalcanal began applying old ideas of land warfare to a very new map.

If the Japanese were there, they must be driven out. It was slow, costly, and generally indecisive.

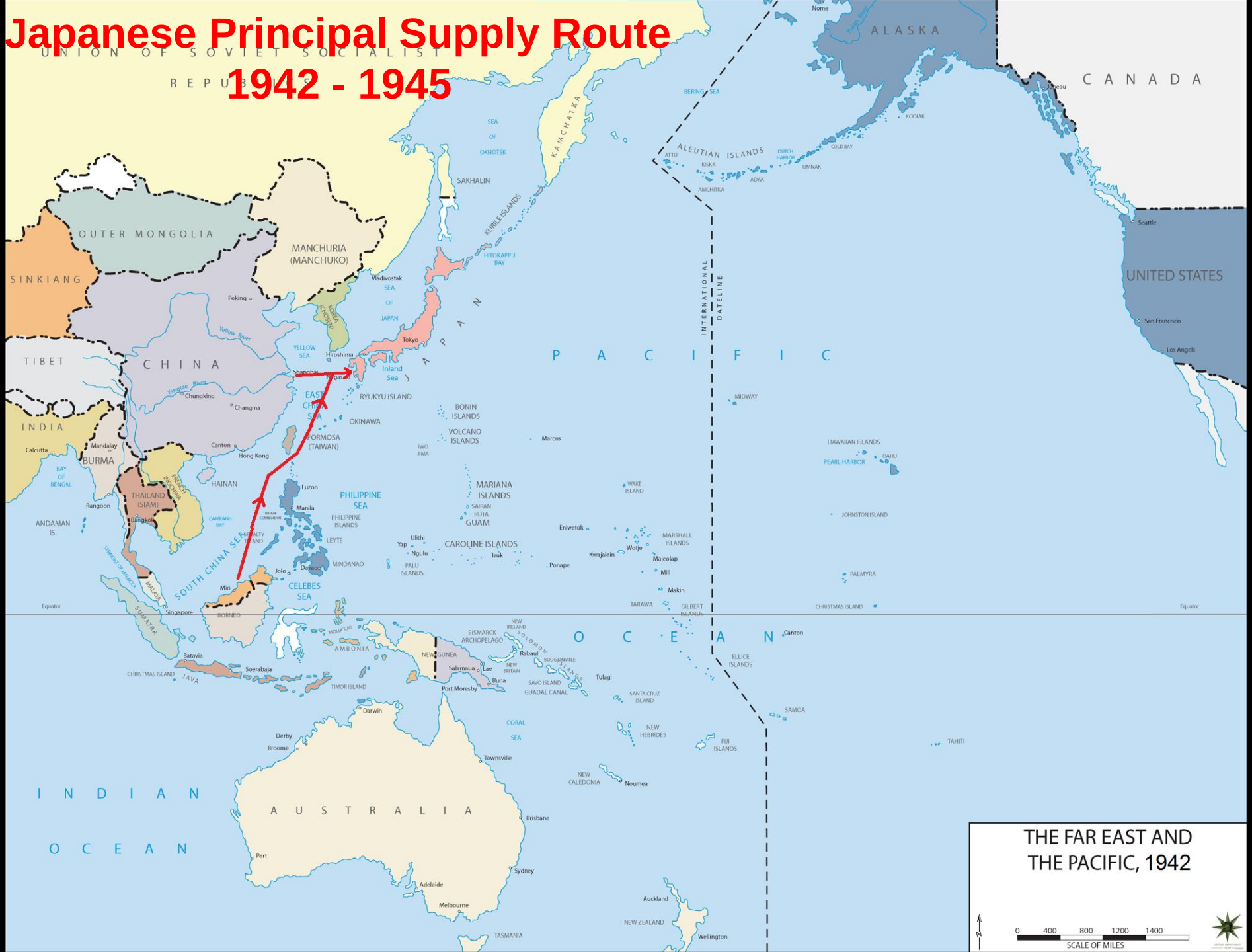
STRATEGY IN THE PACIFIC

1943 was a year of learning for the U.S. planners and commanders – specifically learning what they had been taught before the war was nonsense.

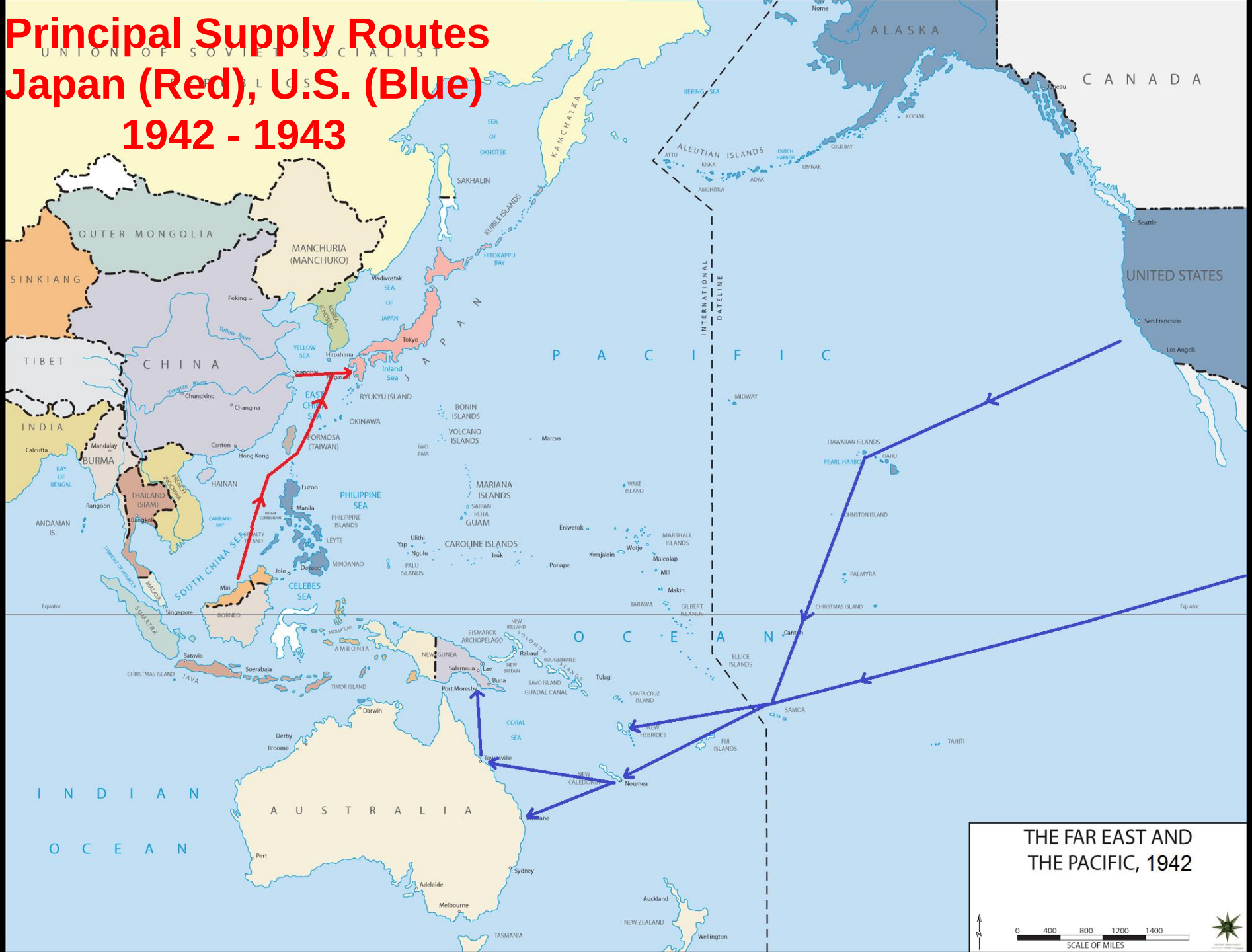
By the early 1944, gaining ground had been largely abandoned in favor of controlling the "Battle Space." (The term would not become common until the 1980's) This meant combined arms – Air, Land and Sea. Objectives were chosen not because the Japanese were there but because it pushed the U.S. controlled Battle Space westward.

As the U.S. Battle Space pushed west, Japanese strongholds outside of their own Battle Space were cut off and rendered combat ineffective, often at little cost to the U.S.

Japanese Principal Supply Route
1942 - 1945

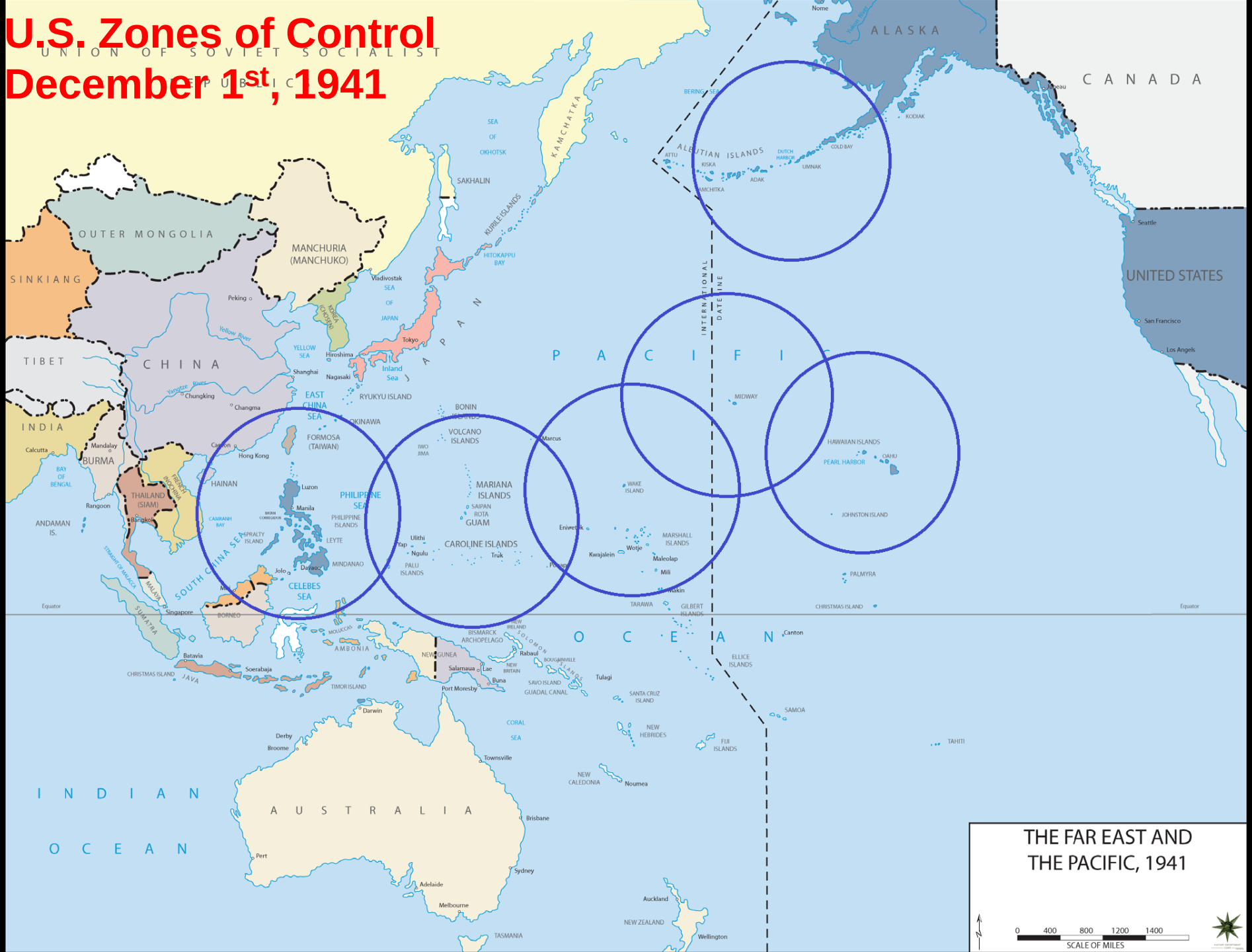


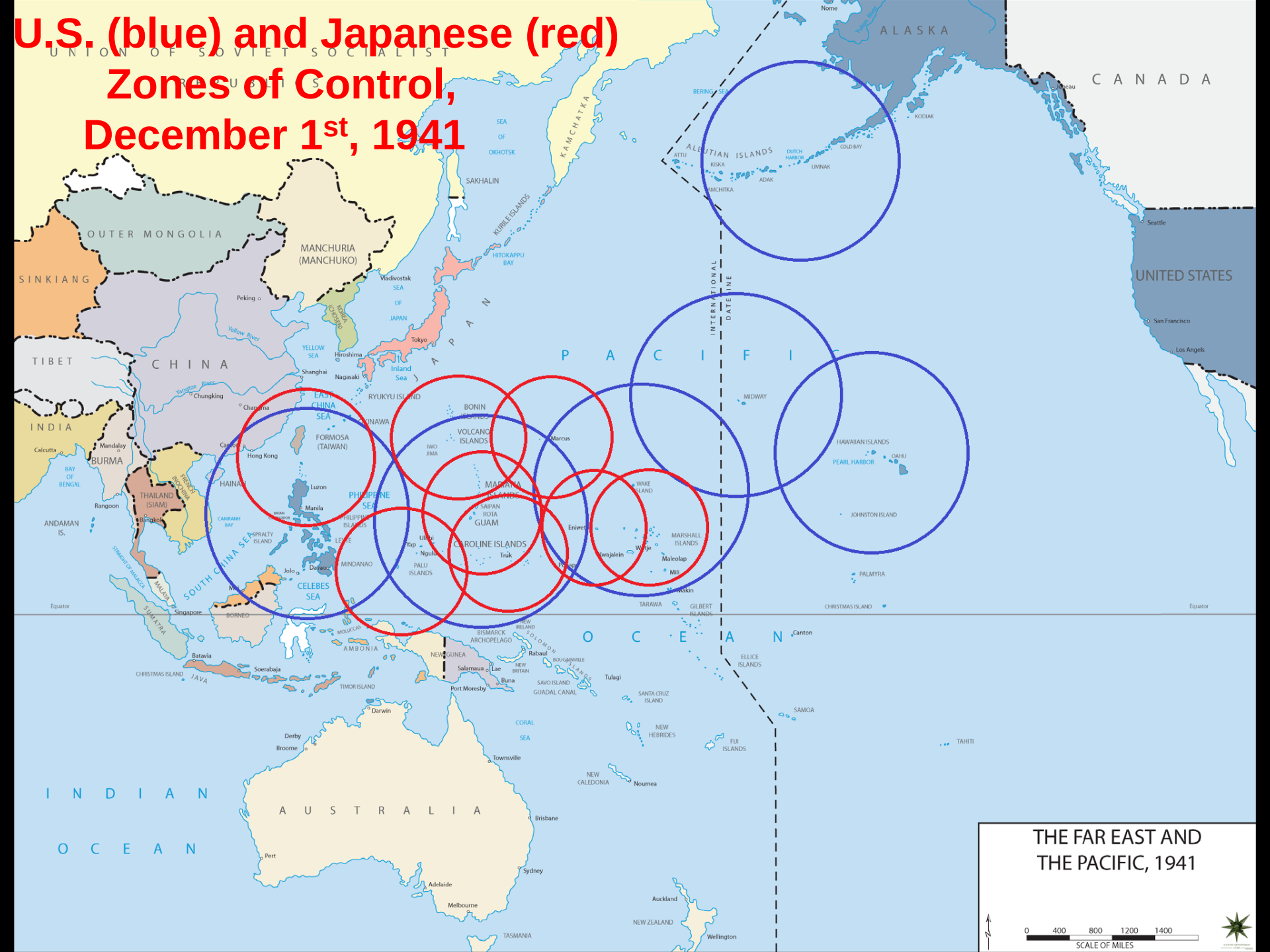
Principal Supply Routes
Japan (Red), U.S. (Blue)
1942 - 1943



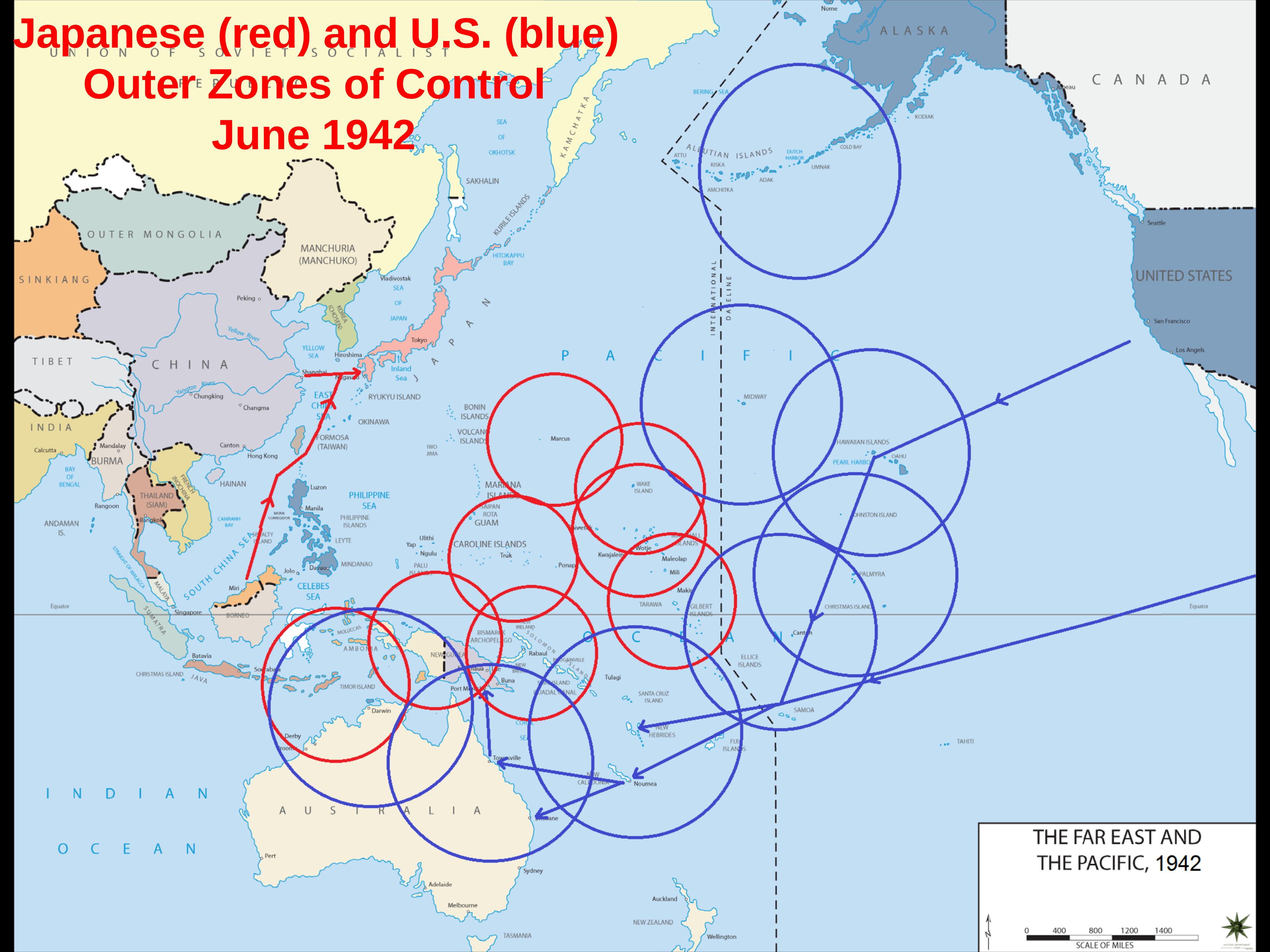
THE FAR EAST AND THE PACIFIC, 1942

U.S. Zones of Control
December 1st, 1941

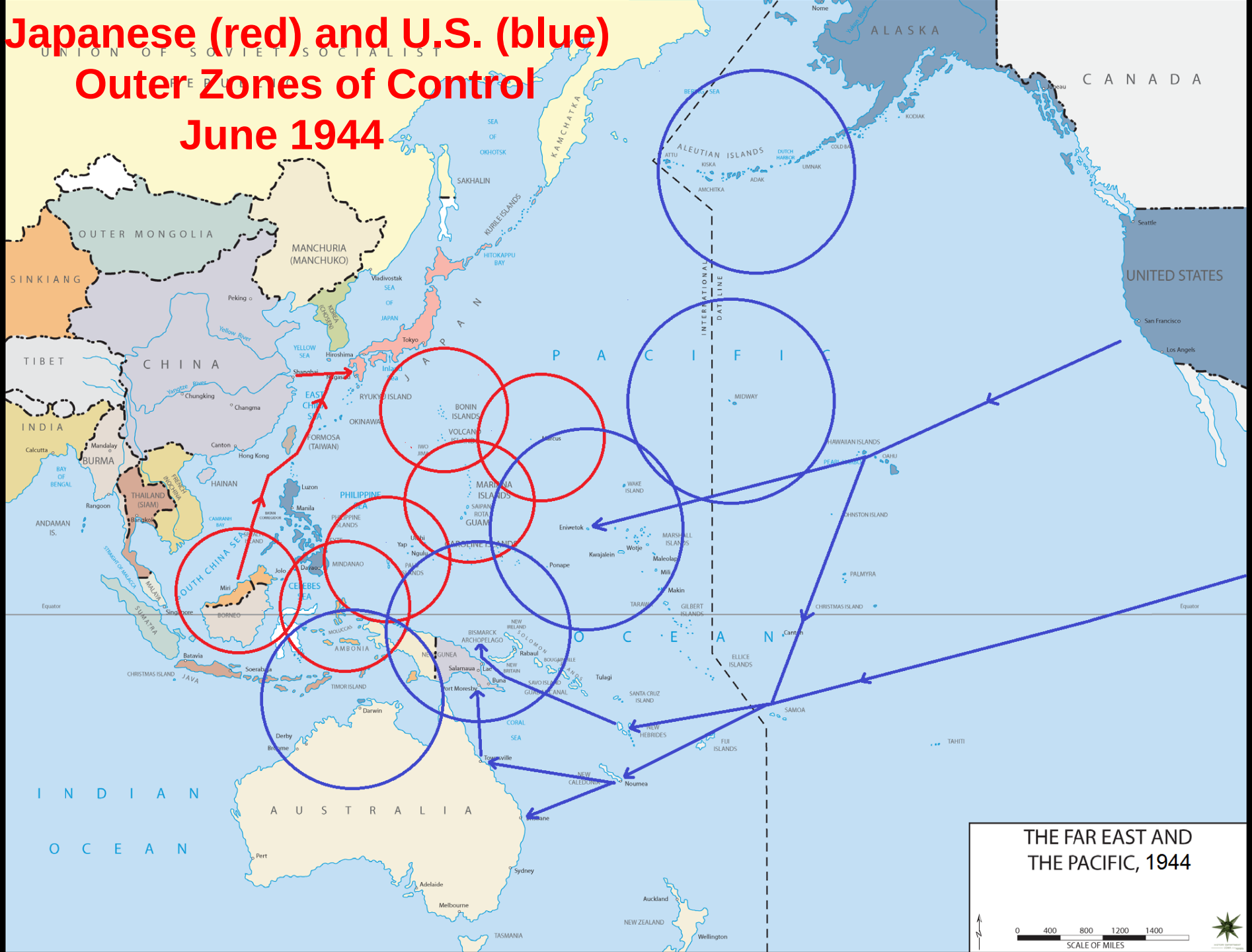


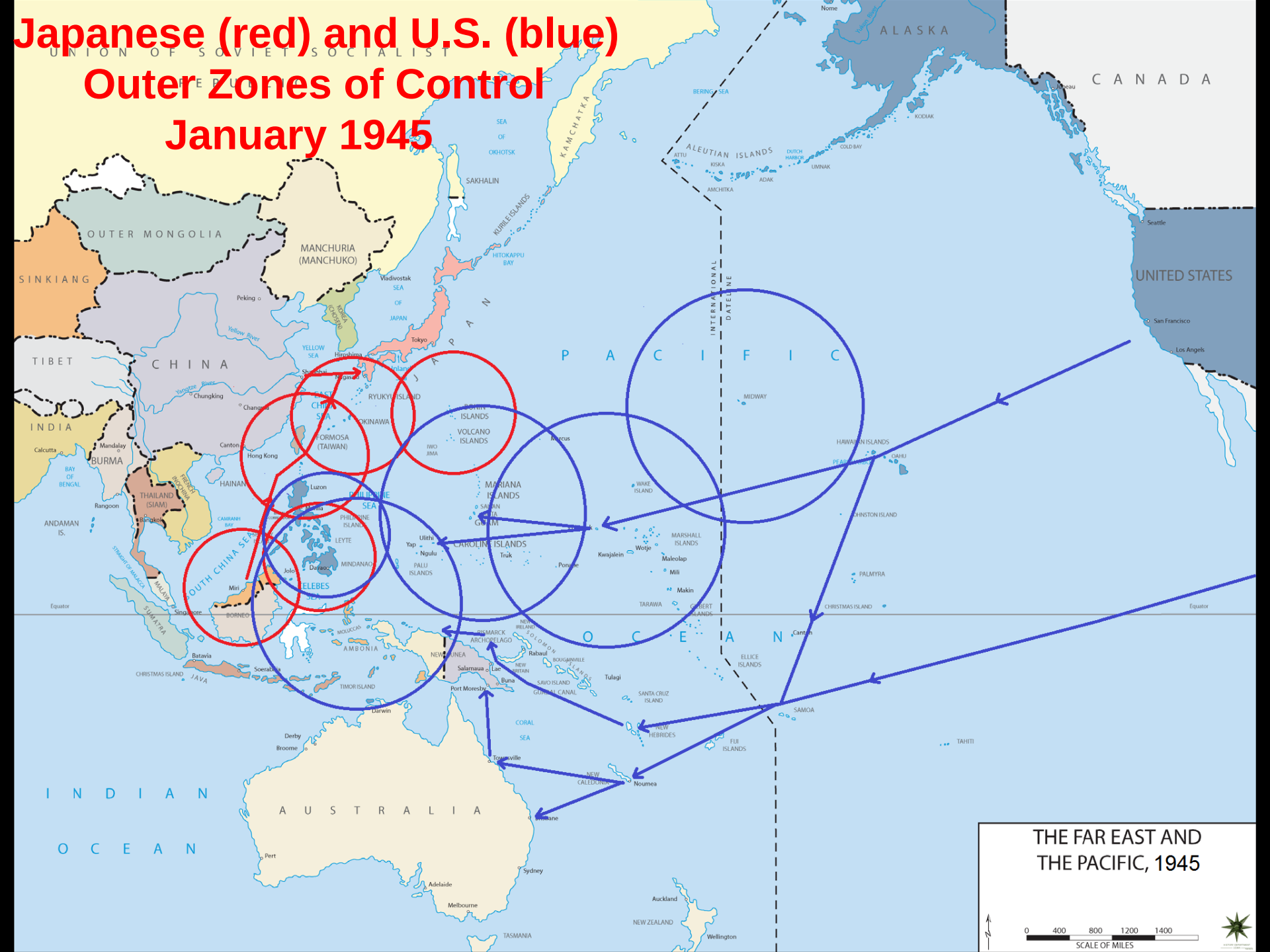

U.S. (blue) and Japanese (red) Zones of Control, December 1st, 1941
THE FAR EAST AND THE PACIFIC, 1941
SCALE OF MILES
0 400 800 1200 1400
ALASKA
CANADA
UNITED STATES
PACIFIC OCEAN
INDIAN OCEAN
AUSTRALIA
JAPAN
CHINA
OUTER MONGOLIA
MANCHURIA (MANCHUKO)
SINKIANG
TIBET
INDIA
BURMA
THAILAND (SIAM)
PHILIPPINE SEA
SOUTH CHINA SEA
EAST CHINA SEA
CELEBES SEA
CORAL SEA
TASMANIA
NEW ZEALAND
INTERNATIONAL DATE LINE
Nome
Juneau
Seattle
San Francisco
Los Angeles
Tokyo
Hiroshima
Nagasaki
Shanghai
Peking
Vladivostok
SAKHALIN
KURILE ISLANDS
KAMCHATKA
ALEUTIAN ISLANDS
KODIAK
COLD BAY
DUTCH HARBOR
UMNAK
ATTU
KISKA
ADAK
AMCHITKA
BERING SEA
SEA OF OKHOTSK
SEA OF JAPAN
HITOKAPPU BAY
KOREA (CHOSEN)
YELLOW SEA
Inland Sea
RYUKYU ISLAND
OKINAWA
FORMOSA (TAIWAN)
Hong Kong
Canton
Chungking
Changsha
Yangtze River
Yellow River
HAINAN
Luzon
Manila
Bangkok
Rangoon
Calcutta
Mandalay
BAY OF BENGAL
ANDAMAN IS.
FRENCH INDOCHINA
CAMRANH BAY
SPRATLY ISLAND
PHILIPPINE ISLANDS
LEYTE
MINDANAO
Davao
Jolo
BORNEO
Singapore
STRAIT OF MALACCA
MALAYA
SUMATRA
JAVA
Batavia
Soerabaja
CHRISTMAS ISLAND
TIMOR ISLAND
Darwin
Derby
Broome
Townsville
Brisbane
Perth
Adelaide
Melbourne
Sydney
Auckland
Wellington
Noumea
NEW CALEDONIA
NEW HEBRIDES
FIJI ISLANDS
SAMOA
TAHITI
ELLICE ISLANDS
SANTA CRUZ ISLAND
GUADAL CANAL
SAVO ISLAND
BOUGAINVILLE
NEW BRITAIN
NEW IRELAND
SOLOMON ISLANDS
BISMARCK ARCHIPELAGO
NEW GUINEA
Rabaul
Salamaua
Lae
Buna
Port Moresby
MOLUCCAS
AMBONIA
Tulagi
BONIN ISLANDS
VOLCANO ISLANDS
IWO JIMA
Marcus
MARIANA ISLANDS
SAIPAN
ROTA
GUAM
CAROLINE ISLANDS
Yap
Ulithi
Ngulu
Truk
PALAU ISLANDS
Enivetok
Kwajalein
Wotje
Maleolap
Mili
Jaluit
Wake
MARSHALL ISLANDS
TARAWA
GILBERT ISLANDS
MIDWAY
HAWAIIAN ISLANDS
PEARL HARBOR
OAHU
JOHNSTON ISLAND
PALMYRA
CHRISTMAS ISLAND
Equator

Japanese Outer Zones of Control
June 1942


Japanese (red) and U.S. (blue)
Outer Zones of Control
June 1942
THE FAR EAST AND
THE PACIFIC, 1942
UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS
ALASKA
CANADA
UNITED STATES
OUTER MONGOLIA
SINKIANG
MANCHURIA (MANCHUKO)
TIBET
CHINA
INDIA
BURMA
THAILAND (SIAM)
FRENCH INDOCHINA
KOREA (CHOSEN)
JAPAN
SAKHALIN
KAMCHATKA
KURILE ISLANDS
ALEUTIAN ISLANDS
SEA OF OKHOTSK
SEA OF JAPAN
YELLOW SEA
EAST CHINA SEA
SOUTH CHINA SEA
PHILIPPINE SEA
CELEBES SEA
BAY OF BENGAL
FORMOSA (TAIWAN)
OKINAWA
RYUKYU ISLAND
BONIN ISLANDS
VOLCANO ISLANDS
IWO JIMA
MARIANA ISLANDS
SAIPAN
ROTA
GUAM
CAROLINE ISLANDS
Truk
Ponape
Marcus
WAKE ISLAND
MIDWAY
HAWAIIAN ISLANDS
PEARL HARBOR
OAHU
JOHNSTON ISLAND
PALMYRA
CHRISTMAS ISLAND
Canton
Kwajalein
Wotje
Maleolap
Mili
TARAWA
GILBERT ISLANDS
ELLICE ISLANDS
SAMOA
FIJI ISLANDS
NEW HEBRIDES
NEW CALEDONIA
Noumea
SANTA CRUZ ISLAND
Tulagi
GUADALCANAL
BISMARCK ARCHIPELAGO
Rabaul
NEW GUINEA
Port Moresby
Buna
Lae
Salamaua
CORAL SEA
AUSTRALIA
Darwin
Derby
Broome
Townsville
Brisbane
Sydney
Melbourne
Adelaide
Perth
TASMANIA
NEW ZEALAND
Auckland
Wellington
TAHITI
BORNEO
SUMATRA
JAVA
Batavia
Surabaya
TIMOR ISLAND
MOLUCCAS
AMBON
MALAYA
Singapore
Luzon
Manila
MINDANAO
Davao
LEYTE
Shanghai
Nagasaki
Hiroshima
Tokyo
Peking
Chungking
Changma
Canton
Hong Kong
HAINAN
Calcutta
Mandalay
Rangoon
Bangkok
ANDAMAN IS.
Vladivostok
Nome
KODIAK
DUTCH HARBOR
KISKA
ATTU
ADAK
UMNAK
AMCHITKA
Seattle
San Francisco
Los Angeles
INDIAN OCEAN
PACIFIC OCEAN
INTERNATIONAL DATE LINE
Equator
SCALE OF MILES
0 400 800 1200 1400

Japanese (red) and U.S. (blue) Outer Zones of Control June 1944




Japanese (red) and U.S. (blue)
Outer Zones of Control
January 1945
THE FAR EAST AND
THE PACIFIC, 1945
SCALE OF MILES
0 400 800 1200 1400
ALASKA
CANADA
UNITED STATES
PACIFIC
OCEAN
INDIAN
OCEAN
AUSTRALIA
JAPAN
CHINA
OUTER MONGOLIA
MANCHURIA
(MANCHUKO)
SINKIANG
TIBET
INDIA
BURMA
THAILAND
(SIAM)
SOUTH CHINA SEA
PHILIPPINE SEA
CELEBES SEA
BERING SEA
SEA OF OKHOTSK
SEA OF JAPAN
YELLOW SEA
KAMCHATKA
SAKHALIN
KURILE ISLANDS
ALEUTIAN ISLANDS
INTERNATIONAL DATELINE
RYUKYU ISLAND
OKINAWA
FORMOSA
(TAIWAN)
BONIN ISLANDS
VOLCANO ISLANDS
MARIANA ISLANDS
CAROLINE ISLANDS
MARSHALL ISLANDS
GILBERT ISLANDS
HAWAIIAN ISLANDS
MIDWAY
WAKE ISLAND
JOHNSTON ISLAND
PALMYRA
CHRISTMAS ISLAND
SAMOA
FIJI ISLANDS
NEW HEBRIDES
NEW CALEDONIA
NEW ZEALAND
TASMANIA
CORAL SEA
BISMARCK ARCHIPELAGO
NEW GUINEA
SOLOMON ISLANDS
GUADALCANAL
TIMOR ISLAND
JAVA
SUMATRA
BORNEO
MALAYA
ANDAMAN IS.
Tokyo
Hiroshima
Nagasaki
Shanghai
Peking
Vladivostak
Hong Kong
Canton
Chungking
Changsha
Calcutta
Mandalay
Rangoon
Bangkok
Luzon
Manila
Leyte
Mindanao
Davao
Jolo
Miri
Singapore
Batavia
Soerabaja
Darwin
Port Moresby
Salamaua
Lae
Buna
Rabaul
Tulagi
Truk
Ponape
Kwajalein
Wotje
Maleolap
Mili
Makin
Yap
Ulithi
Ngulu
Palau Islands
Iwo Jima
Marcus
Oahu
Seattle
San Francisco
Los Angels
Nome
Juneau
Kodiak
Dutch Harbor
Cold Bay
Umnak
Attu
Kiska
Adak
Amchitka
Townsville
Derby
Broome
Perth
Adelaide
Melbourne
Sydney
Brisbane
Auckland
Wellington
Noumea
Equator

WORLD OF HURT

WORLD OF HURT

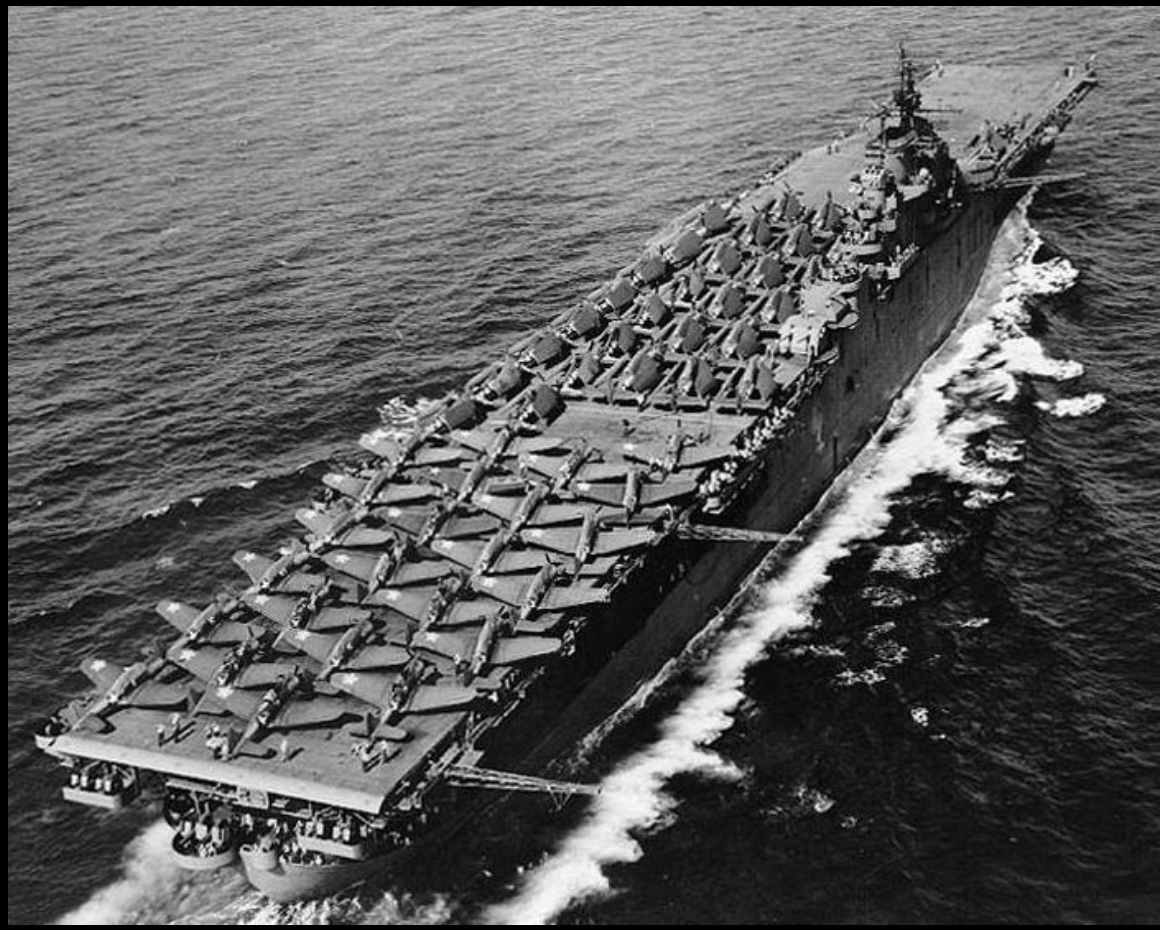
ESSEX CLASS AIRCRAFT CARRIERS
16 completed during the war.
8 completed after the war.
8 cancelled.

Length:	**820 ft. (waterline)**
	860 ft. (flight deck)
	870 ft. (overall)
Beam:	**93 ft. (waterline)**
	148 ft. (overall)
Displacement:	**30,800 tons**
Speed:	**33 knots**
Compliment:	**2,170 (ship)**
	870 (air wing)
	160 (staff)
Aircraft:	**90 – 100**

Planning for this class began in 1938. The first three ships were ordered on July 3rd, 1940. Two weeks later, congress passed the Two Ocean Navy Act calling for a 70% expansion of the Navy as a deterrent against the aggression in both the Atlantic and Pacific adding ten more of these carriers. Construction of the lead ship – Essex – began in April 1941. Essex would be commissioned in December 1942, the first of sixteen of her class that would serve in the war.

WORLD OF HURT

USS Essex (CV-9)	12/42
USS Lexington (CV-16)	02/43
USS Yorktown (CV-10)	04/43
USS Bunker Hill (CV-17)	05/43
USS Intrepid (CV-11)	08/43
USS Hornet (CV-12)	11/43
USS Wasp (CV-18)	11/43
USS Franklin (CV-13)	01/44
USS Hancock (CV-19)	04/44
USS Ticonderoga (CV-14)	05/44
USS Bennington (CV-20)	08/44
USS Shangri-La (CV-38)	09/44
USS Randolph (CV-15)	10/44
USS Bon Homme Richard	11/44
USS Antietam (CV-36)	01/45
USS Boxer (CV-21)	04/45



WORLD OF HURT

INDEPENDENCE CLASS LIGHT AIRCRAFT CARRIERS (9 built)

Length:	**622 ft. (waterline)**
Beam:	**72 ft. (waterline)**
	109 ft. (overall)
Displacement:	**11,000 tons**
Speed:	**32 knots**
Aircraft:	**33 – 36**

A smaller "light" carrier was discussed before the war and generally discounted. The Navy felt that while such a concept was readily feasible, the smaller ship did not add enough capability to be worth the effort.

But with the new Essex class not due in any significant numbers anytime soon, once the war began the government began ordering "light" carriers. These were Cleveland class light cruisers already under construction which were converted before completion into the light carriers. They were faster to build than the Fleet Carriers of the Essex class and, unlike Escort Carriers already building, they were fast enough to operate with the fast carrier task forces.

WORLD OF HURT

USS Independence (CVL-22) (ex-USS Amsterdam CL-59)	01/43
USS Princeton (CVL-23)* (ex-USS Tallahassee CL-61)	02/43
USS Belleau Wood (CVL-24) (ex-USS New Haven CL-76)	03/43
USS Cowpens (CVL-25) (ex-Huntington CL-77)	05/43
USS Monterey (CVL-26) (ex-Dayton CL-78)	06/43
USS Cabot (CVL-28) (ex-Wilmington CL-79)	07/43
USS Langley (CVL-27) (ex-Fargo CL-85)	08/43
USS Bataan (CVL-29) (ex-Buffalo CL-84)	11/43
USS San Jacinto (CVL-30) (ex-Newark CL-88)	11/43

(USS Princeton was sunk 10/44)

WORLD OF HURT

LONG ISLAND CLASS (CVE-1)
1 USN, 1 Royal Navy (2 total)

Length:	**491 ft.**
Beam:	**70 ft.**
Displacement:	**13,500 tons**
Speed:	**17 knots**
Compliment:	**970**
Aircraft:	**21**

BOGUE CLASS (CVE-12) – (CVE-31)
11 USN, 34 Royal Navy (45 total)

Length:	**496 ft.**
Beam:	**70 feet.**
Displacement:	**16,620 tons**
Speed:	**18 knots**
Compliment:	**980**
Aircraft:	**24**

WORLD OF HURT

CHARGER CLASS (CVE-30)
1 USN, 3 Royal Navy

Length:	**492 feet**
Beam:	**70 feet**
Displacement:	**8,000 tons**
Speed:	**17 knots**
Compliment:	**856**
Aircraft	**30**

USS Charger was used primarily as a training carrier.

SANGAMON CLASS (CVE-26) – (CVE-29)
4 USN

Length:	**533 ft.**
Beam:	**75 ft.**
Displacement:	**11,400 tons**
Speed:	**18 knots**
Compliment:	**1080**
Aircraft:	**32**

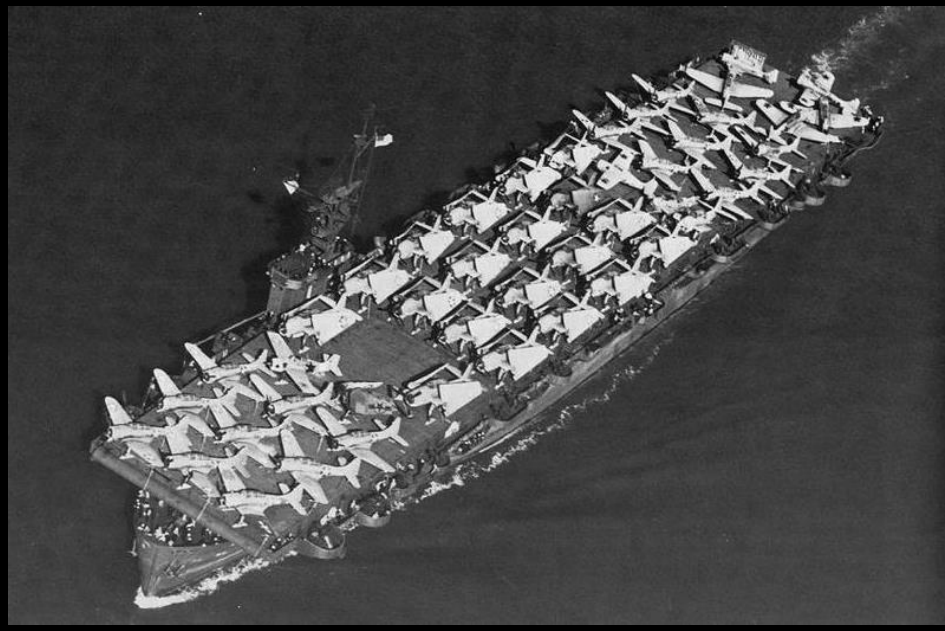
WORLD OF HURT

CASABLANCA CLASS (CVE-55) – (CVE-104)
50 USN

Length:	**512 ft.**
Beam:	**66 feet.**
Displacement:	**7,800 tons**
Speed:	**20 knots**
Compliment:	**910**
Aircraft:	**28**

COMMENCEMENT BAY CLASS
9 USN, 8 completed after the war, 6 cancelled.

Length:	**557 ft.**
Beam:	**75 ft.**
Displacement:	**10,900 tons**
Speed:	**19 knots**
Compliment:	**1066**
Aircraft:	**34**



WORLD OF HURT

LONG ISLAND CLASS	
USS Long Island (CVE-1)P	06/41
+1 Royal Navy	
BOGUE CLASS	
USS Copahe (CVE-12)P	06/42
USS Nassau (CVE-16)P	08/42
USS Bogue (CVE-9)A	09/42
USS Altamaha (CVE-18)P	09/42
USS Card (CVE-11)A	11/42
USS Core (CVE-13)	12/42
USS Barnes (CVE-20)P	02/43
USS Block Island (CVE-21)A(S)	03/43
USS Breton (CVE-23)P	04/43
USS Croatan (CVE-25)A	04/43
USS Prince William (CVE-31)	04/43
+34 Royal Navy	

A – Served in Atlantic Only
P – Served in Pacific Only
(S) – Sunk

The Escort carrier was intended to be just what its name implied: and escort; specifically an escort for Atlantic convoys.

The U.S. intended to build them almost entirely for the British but until Lend Lease was passed in March of 1941, the British could only afford four of them.

WORLD OF HURT

CHARGER CLASS

USS Charger (CVE-30)A	03/42

SANGAMON CLASS

USS Sangamon (CVE-26)	08/42
USS Santee (CVE-29)	08/42
USS Suwannee (CVE-27)	09/42
USS Chenango (CVE-28)	09/42

CASABLANCA CLASS (Kaiser Coffins)

USS Cassablanca (CVE-55)P	07/43
USS Liscome Bay (CVE-56)P(S)	08/43
USS Anzio (CVE-57)P	08/43
USS Corregidor (CVE-58)P	08/43

A – Served in Atlantic Only
P – Served in Pacific Only
(S) – Sunk

The U.S. kept two of the first six CVE's and put them to work in entirely different roles. While the 38 CVE's that went to the Royal Navy were used for convoy escort, the first two in the U.S. Navy were used to ferry aircraft to remote pacific bases and to train pilots for carrier operations.
In 1943, the Navy would find another role for the little carriers: air support.

WORLD OF HURT

CASABLANCA CLASS (Kaiser Coffins)

USS Mission Bay (CVE-59)A	09/43
USS Guadalcanal (CVE-60)A	09/43
USS Manila Bay (CVE-61)P	10/43
USS Natoma Bay (CVE-62)P	10/43
USS Midway (CVE-63)P(S)	10/43
(renamed St. Lo 10/44)	
USS Tripoli (CVE-64)	10/43
USS Wake Island (CVE-65)	11/43
USS White Plains (CVE-66)P	11/43
USS Solomons (CVE-67)A	11/43
USS Kalinin Bay (CVE-68)P	11/43
USS Kasaan Bay (CVE-69)	12/43
USS Fanshaw Bay (CVE-70)P	12/43
USS Kitkun Bay (CVE-71)P	12/43
USS Tulagi (CVE-72)	12/43
USS Gambier Bay (CVE-73)P(S)	12/43

A – Served in Atlantic Only
P – Served in Pacific Only
(S) – Sunk

The CVE's effectively won the Battle of the Atlantic against the German U-boats. They would also be used to hunt and destroy Japanese submarines. They could be called "jeep" carriers partly for their size but more because they did so many missions so well.

WORLD OF HURT

CASABLANCA CLASS (Kaiser Coffins)

USS Nehenta Bay (CVE-74)P	01/44
USS Hoggat Bay (CVE-75)P	01/44
USS Kadashan Bay (CVE-76)P	01/44
USS Marcus Island (CVE-77)P	01/44
USS Savo Island (CVE-78)P	01/44
USS Ommaney Bay (CVE-79)P(S)	02/44
USS Petrof Bay (CVE-80)P	02/44
USS Rudyerd Bay (CVE-81)P	02/44
USS Saginaw Bay (CVE-82)P	03/44
USS Sargent Bay (CVE-83)P	03/44
USS Shamrock Bay (CVE-84)P	03/44
USS Shipley Bay (CVE-85)P	03/44
USS Sitkoh Bay (CVE-86)P	03/44
USS Steamer Bay (CVE-87)P	04/44
USS Cape Esperance (CVE-88)P	04/44
USS Takanis Bay (CVE-89)P	04/44

A – Served in Atlantic Only
P – Served in Pacific Only
(S) – Sunk

They were built on standardized merchant ship hulls. The first three classes on C3 Cargo Ship hulls and the rest on oil tanker hulls. (Most were never intended to be either). The 50 ships of the Casablanca class were all built by Kaiser shipbuilding in Vancouver WA.

WORLD OF HURT

CASABLANCA CLASS (Kaiser Coffins)

USS Thetis Bay (CVE-90)P	04/44
USS Makassar Strait (CVE-91)P	04/44
USS Windham Bay (CVE-92)P	05/44
USS Makin Island (CVE-93)P	05/44
USS Lunga Point (CVE-94)P	05/44
USS Bismarck Sea (CVE-95)P(S)	05/44
USS Salamaua (CVE-96)P	05/44
USS Hollandia (CVE-97)P	06/44
USS Kwajalein (CVE-98)P	06/44
USS Admiralty Islands (CVE-99)P	06/44
USS Bougainville (CVE-100)P	06/44
USS Matanikau (CVE-101)P	06/44
USS Attu (CVE-102)P	06/44
USS Roi (CVE-103)P	07/44
USS Munda (CVE-104)P	07/44

A – Served in Atlantic Only
P – Served in Pacific Only
(S) – Sunk

The crews called them “Combustable, Vulnerable and Expendible” (CVE). Yet they proved to be very durable. Only six were sunk: two by submarines, one in a surface fight with enemy cruisers and battleships (three others were only damaged), and three to kamikazes where another 14 were damaged and quickly repaired.

WORLD OF HURT

COMMENCEMENT BAY CLASS

USS Commencement Bay (CVE-105)P	11/44
USS Block Island (CVE-106)P	12/44
USS Gilbert Islands (CVE-107)P	02/45
USS Cape Gloucester (CVE-109)P	03/45
USS Vella Gulf (CVE-111)P	04/45
USS Kula Gulf (CVE-108)P	05/45
USS Salerno Bay (CVE-110)P	05/45
USS Siboney (CVE-112)P	05/45
USS Puget Sound (CVE-113)P	06/45

A – Served in Atlantic Only
P – Served in Pacific Only
(S) – Sunk

The U.S. Navy had not been enamored with the idea of little, slow carriers in 1941 when they began building them for convoy duty. Only 17 of the 77 CVE's built for the U.S. Navy ever served as Atlantic convoy escorts and ten of those transferred to the Pacific. It was the multitude of missions the ships could do, relieving the fast carriers from doing them instead that made the ships so valuable to the U.S. Navy and those missions were Pacific missions.

WORLD OF HURT

The U.S. began the war with only three carriers of any type in the Pacific. They would end the war with 96: 18 CV's (including Saratoga and Enterprise); 8 CVL's (1 was sunk); and 70 CVE's.

The Navy also began with an obsolete Torpedo bomber, an adequate dive bomber and an outclassed carrier fighter.

The F4F was adequate but had limitations in range and speed. 7,860 were built. It shot down 1,327 enemy planes for 178 lost in aerial combat; or a kill ratio (number of enemy shot down per F4F shot down) of 7.5 to 1. Not bad, but even before the war the Navy and Marines wanted better planes for their squadrons and, with one exception, they got them.

The replacements had been on order since well before Pearl Harbor.

WORLD OF HURT

Grumman TBF Avenger
- **Development ordered – 1939**
- **First Flight – 08/07/41**
- **First Combat – 06/04/42**

By far the best torpedo plane in the war and a substantial improvement over the Devastator, it also proved a deadly submarine hunter in both the Atlantic and Pacific. It was rugged but its pilots said it flew like a truck – the good and bad. It was also the largest single engine bomber ever and largest carrier plane of the war.

	TBF	Douglas TBD Devastator
Speed (max):	275 MPH	206 MPH
Cruise Speed:	160 MPH	128 MPF
Combat Range:	1,000 miles	435 – 716 miles (torpedo/bomb)
Ceiling:	30,000	19,000 ft.
Bombs:	2,000 lb	1,000 lb
Built:	9,839	130

WORLD OF HURT

Vought F4U Corsair
- **Development ordered – 1938**
- **First Flight – 05/29/40**
- **First Combat – 12/28/42**

Japanese feared the F4U more than any other U.S. fighter. It was mostly land based as its speed, wing-shape and cockpit location made carrier operations difficult until modifications were made. It flew 64,051 sorties and enjoyed an 11:1 kill ration, 12:1 against the A6M zero. It led all fighter types in bombing missions (70% of the total).

	F4U	Grumman F4F Wildcat
Speed (max):	417 MPH	329 MPH
Combat Range:	1,015 miles	839 miles
Ceiling:	37,000	34,000 ft.
Guns:	6 x .50 Cal + 4 20mm	4 – 6 x .50 Cal.
Built:	12,571	7,885
Bombs:	4,000 lb	500 lb

WORLD OF HURT

Grumman F6F Hellcat
- **Development ordered – June 1941**
- **First Flight – 06/23/42**
- **First Combat – 09/01/43**

The deadliest fighter of the Second World War, the F6F claimed a 19:1 kill ratio, 13:1 against the A6M Zero. The Hellcat led all U.S. fighters in aces – 305. The leading Navy/Marine Corps ace David McCampbell scored his 34 kills in the Hellcat. 66,530 sorties were flown during the war.

	F6F	Grumman F4F Wildcat
Speed (max):	391 MPH	329 MPH
Combat Range:	1,330 miles	839 miles
Ceiling:	37,000	34,000 ft.
Guns:	6 x .50 Cal	4 – 6 x .50 Cal.
Built:	12,275	7,885
Bombs:	4,000 lb	500 lb

WORLD OF HURT

Curtiss SB2C Helldiver
- **Development ordered – 1938**
- **First Flight – 12/18/40**
- **First Combat – 11/11/43**

The plane was ordered by both the Army and Navy (the Army designation was the A-25). It had numerous problems in development – including the fact that its wings tore off in a dive. The Navy demanded no less than 880 modifications before it would accept delivery. Even then it was not a marked improvement over the SDB. The Navy was stuck with it. It never came close to the Dauntless as a ship-killer.

	SB2C	Douglas SDB Daunltess
Speed (max):	300 MPH	255 MPH
(cruise):	160 MPH	185 MPH
Combat Range:	1,165 miles	1,115 miles
Ceiling:	29,000 ft.	25,500 ft.
Load:	2,000 lb max.	2,250 lb max.
Built:	7,140	5,936

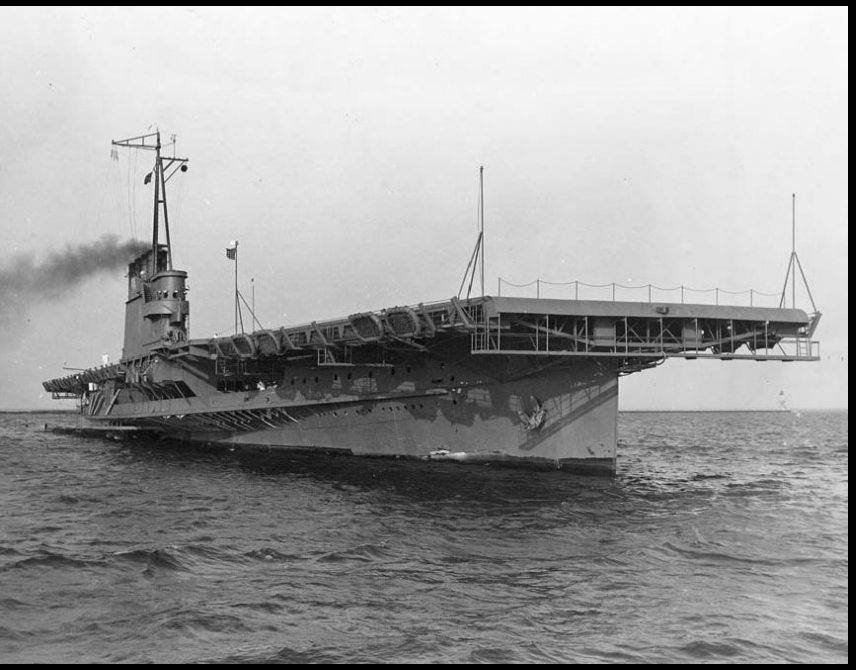
WORLD OF HURT

When Japan surrendered, the U.S. navy had deck space on its carriers for 3,680 planes when the war ended with new carriers that would have carried an additional 1,270 planes that would enter service in the next six months. And it had more carrier pilots than there was space available at sea.

How did it get them trained? Before the war, the carriers of the fleet had to be made available to train new pilots on carrier landings and take-offs. This was not ideal in a war where every carrier was needed.

By June of 1942, only USS Charger was used as a training carrier. Some of the new CVE's spent a couple of months doing the same mission – usually in the winter months. Most carrier pilots learned with the Lake Michigan Navy…

THE LAKE MICHIGAN NAVY

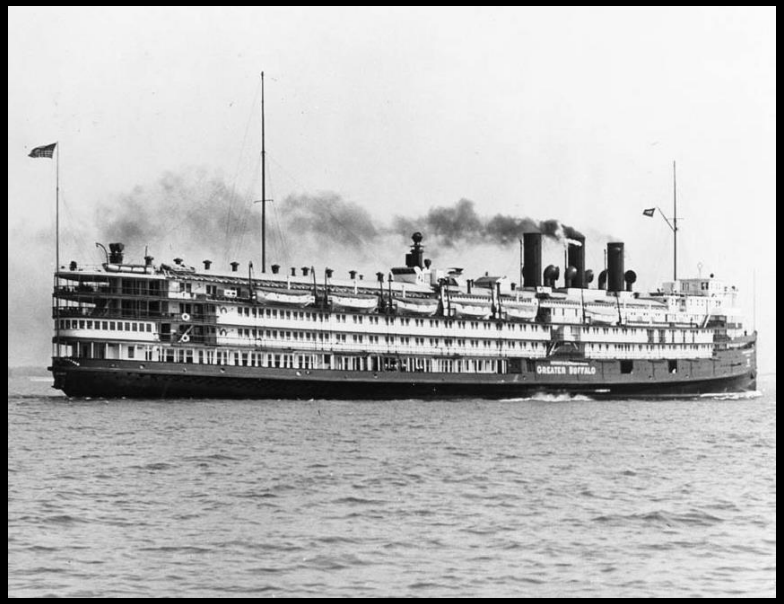


With the outbreak of the war, the Navy knew it lacked the ability to train pilots for carrier operations – or would unless it held operational carriers back in U.S. waters for that purpose. Until July of 1942, it had done that.

But by August it had two dedicated training carriers. One was the USS Charger. The other was the first of two odd ships.

In January 1942, the Navy purchased a paddle-wheeled Great Lakes excursion steamer: the Seeanbee. It was sent to a great lakes shipbuilder in Buffalo NY where its superstructure was removed and replaced becoming the world's first coal fired, paddle wheel driven aircraft carrier: the USS Wolverine.

THE LAKE MICHIGAN NAVY



With Wolverine in service, the Navy then bought another paddle wheeled excursion steamer: the Greater Buffalo. It went through a similar conversion joining the Wolverine in May of 1943 as the USS Sable.

The Wolverine was 500 ft long by 98 ft at the widest point. It could make 22 knots in calm seas. Sable was 535 ft long by 95 ft. It could only make 18 knots which was a problem.

Pilots flew the type of aircraft they were to fly in the fleet and not training aircraft and some of the newer planes needed 25 knots of wind over the deck to take off. If there was no wind, neither ship could operate those aircraft.

Still 17,820 pilots qualified making over 116,000 carrier landings.

THE LAKE MICHIGAN NAVY

The two ships had no hangers for planes and no ability to fuel them. The planes came from Glenview Naval Air Station. If they could not return, they were stuck on the ship. The two carriers were moored at Navy Pier, Chicago when not out conducting training.

They trained seven days a week and only stopped if the ice on Lake Michigan was really too thick or conditions too terrible.

THE ILLINOIS NAVY

The two training carriers were the only ones in the U.S. Navy at the time with steel flight decks. All the others were made of wood (being easier to repair and unlikely to cause sparks which would ignite aviation gasoline.) The steel decks were for the safety of the ship, not the pilots.

THE LAKE MICHIGAN NAVY

The training was hard on pilots and harder on aircraft. The Japanese used a more cautious system that suffered far fewer mishaps … and produced a fraction of the number of pilots.

The Japanese were craftsmen competing against the assembly line.

THE LAKE MICHIGAN NAVY

Prior to the war, the Navy built most of its own ships and boats at various naval shipyards. Its guns, ammunition and torpedoes were made at various naval weapons stations. Only airplanes were made by private companies and even then the Navy did not pay for development.

The war changed that. There were not nearly enough Navy yards to build the ships so most of the shipbuilding – particularly anything other than battleships – was contracted to private companies.

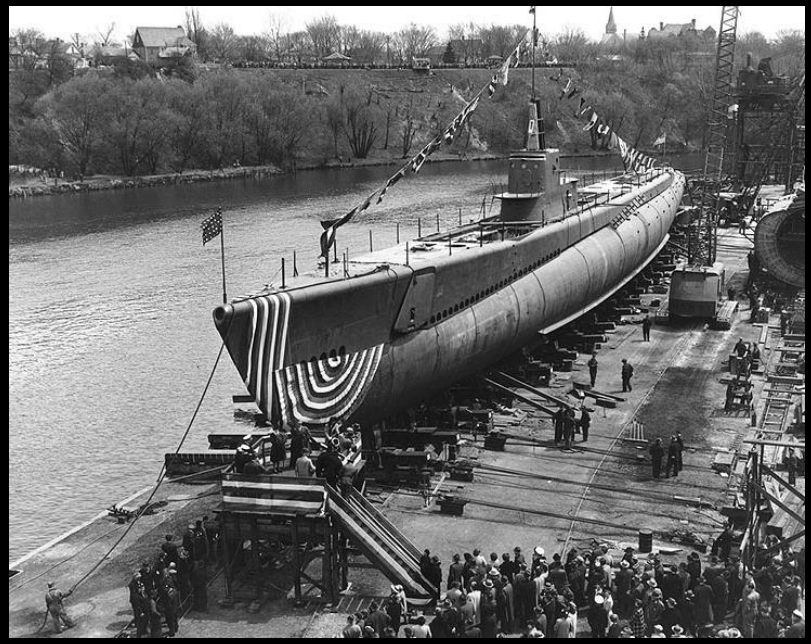
Manitowoc Shipbuilding in Wisconsin was one such company that built ships for the Great Lakes trade – but not the Navy as it was utterly useless where Canada is an ally. But it could still build something…

THE LAKE MICHIGAN NAVY

Manitowoc Shipbuilding was hardly the only facility building submarines. Electric Boat of Groton CT had been building submarines since the beginning, including most of the ones Nimitz had commanded decades ago. Portmouth Navy Yard NH had been building ships for the Navy since 1800 and submarines since 1916.

Manitowoc never had built a submarine before. Why build a boat that sinks?

28 submarines of the Gato and Balao class would be built in Wisconsin. All but four would survive the war. Ten would serve for at least 10 years, 5 of those until the late 1960's or early 1970's. 14 others would serve as long but for Argentina, Italy, the Netherlands or Turkey.



THE LAKE MICHIGAN NAVY

The submarines conducted their sea trials in Lake Michigan. (No doubt a few of them snuck up on the two carriers – submariners have an odd sense of humor.)

They were commissioned into the Navy in Wisconsin and then loaded on to a barge and sent to the sea via the Illinois-Des Plains Canal, and Illinois and Mississippi Rivers.

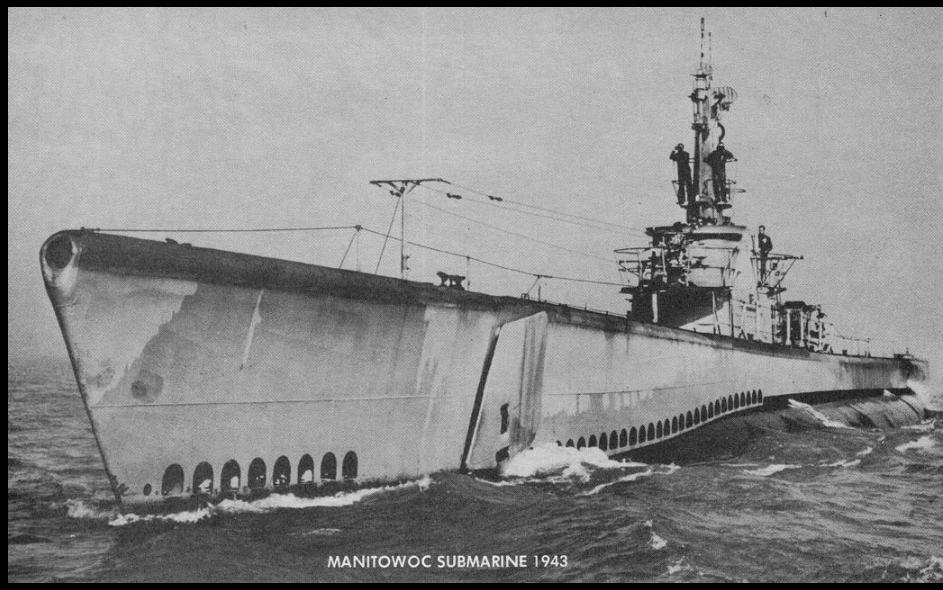
They met salty water at New Orleans (Lake Pontchartrain) and after loading up with supplies, headed south for the Panama Canal and the Pacific Ocean.

It actually did not take them that much longer to get from their builder to the war than the subs from the New England builders.

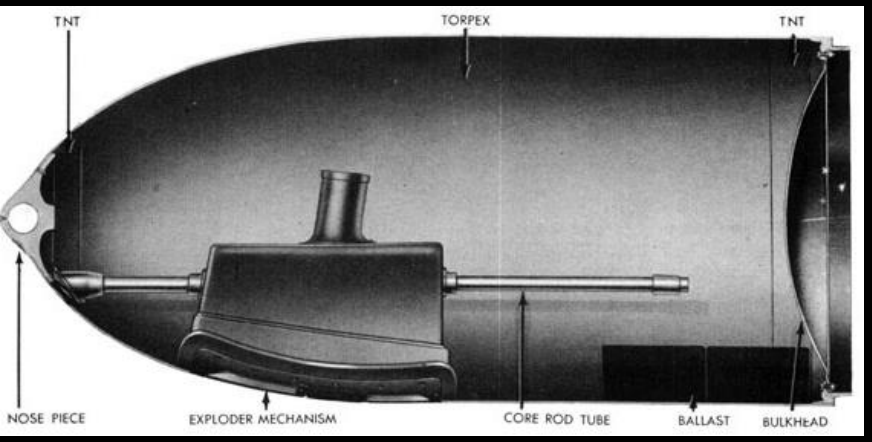
THE LAKE MICHIGAN NAVY

USS Peto (SS-265)	11/42	06/46
USS Pogy (SS-266)	01/43	07/46
USS Pompon (SS-267)	03/43	04/60
USS Puffer (SS-268)	04/43	06/46
USS Rasher (SS-269)	06/43	05/67
USS Raton (SS-270)	07/43	06/69
USS Ray (SS-271)	07/43	09/58
USS Redfin (SS-272)	08/43	05/67
USS Robalo (SS-273)*	09/43	07/44
USS Rock (SS-274)	10/43	09/69
USS Golet (SS-361)*	11/43	06/44
USS Gauvina (SS-362)	12/43	03/59
USS Guitarro (SS-363)	01/44	TK-54
USS Hammerhead (364)	03/44	TK-54
USS Hardhead (SS-365)	04/44	07/72
USS Hawkbill (SS-366)	05/44	ND-53
USS Icefish (SS-367)	06/44	ND-53
USS Jallao (SS-368)	07/44	06/74
USS Kete (SS-369)*	07/44	03/45
USS Kraken (SS-370)	09/44	SP-59
USS Lagarto (SS-371)*	10/44	05/45
USS Lamprey (SS-372)	11/44	AR-60
USS Lizardfish (SS-373)	12/44	IT-60
USS Loggerhead (374)	02/45	06/46
USS Macabi (SS-375)	03/45	AR-60
USS Mapiro (SS-376)	04/45	TK-60
USS Menhaden (SS-377)	06/45	08/71
USS Mero (SS-378)	08/45	TK-60

Wisconsin subs sank 123 Japanese ships in the war.



THE TORPEDO PROBLEM



The Mk-6 torpedo exploder was supposed to be a technological marvel when the Bureau of Ordinance developed it in the late 1920's – it would revolutionize naval warfare.

They were very, very proud of it.

The problem was it did not work.

And convincing them that it did not work was another major problem early in the war.

They said the Sub skippers lacked aggression. When the older skippers (some of whom had lacked aggression) were replaced by younger ones, the younger ones were too eager and lacked tactical proficiency.

But even at close range, the torpedoes failed far more often than they worked.

THE TORPEDO PROBLEM

The exploder had two detonators. The primary one was a magnetic influence detonator that would trigger the explosive when it detected a sudden change in the local magnetic field – like from a large, steel hull above it.

The method is used in modern torpedoes and is devastating, breaking the back of the target and ripping it in two.

The Mark 6 would do that … under perfect conditions … sometimes.

Usually, it either would not detonate at all or would detonate too soon to do any real damage.

The secondary detonator was a contact trigger … that proved so fragile that only a glancing blow set it off. A proper shot would crush it and nothing would happen.

THE TORPEDO PROBLEM

VADM Charles Lockwood (Center facing left) in 1944. Lockwood became commander Submarines Pacific in February 1943. He first had the torpedo problem fixed by his own people, and then unleashed a brutal campaign against Japanese shipping sinking 60% of its merchant fleet.

In February, CINCPAC had a new commander of Submarines. Charles Lockwood had commanded the submarines in the Southwest Pacific (MacArthur's command) and his submarines had been failing far too regularly.

CINCPAC had subs, but it also had a commander who was friends with the admiral in charge of torpedoes back in Washington. Richard English died in a plane crash and Charles Lockwood took over.

He had no friends in the torpedo program and when they made it clear there was nothing wrong with the torpedoes, he made it clear they commanded nothing important enough where he had to listen.

And Nimitz backed him up while King did not back up the weapons people.

THE TORPEDO PROBLEM

Charles “Swede” Monsen. He was an expert in submarine salvage and escape techniques – having invented both and in 1943 salvaged the U.S. Navy’s defective torpedoes and made the submarines deadly.

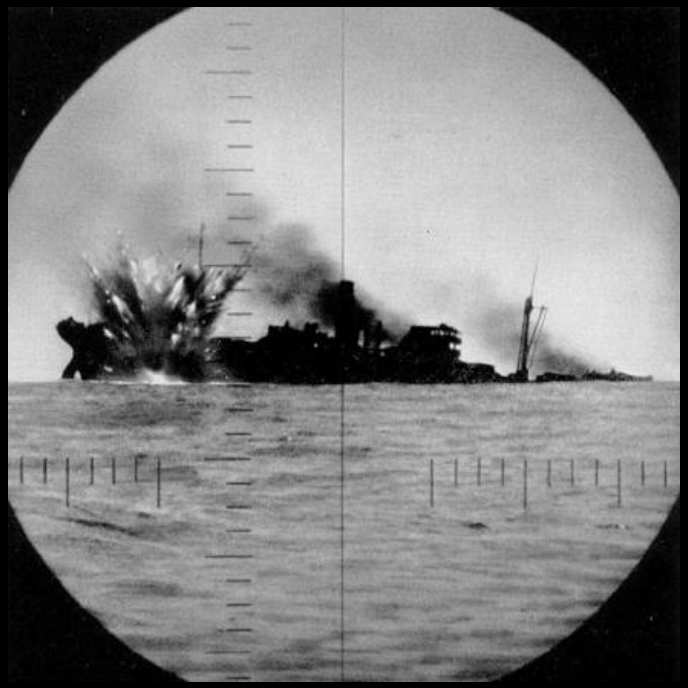
Commander Charles “Swede” Monsen was tasked to look into the problem, which he might have done anyway but now the right people would listen.

He took a sub out, fired torpedoes at a cliff, salvaged any that failed to explode and took them apart to see why. The firing pin was too fragile.

A quick fix in the local machine shop and the torpedoes worked. Lockwood ordered all torpedoes modified – much to the frustration of the torpedo people in Washington but they might have solved the problem … by 1950.

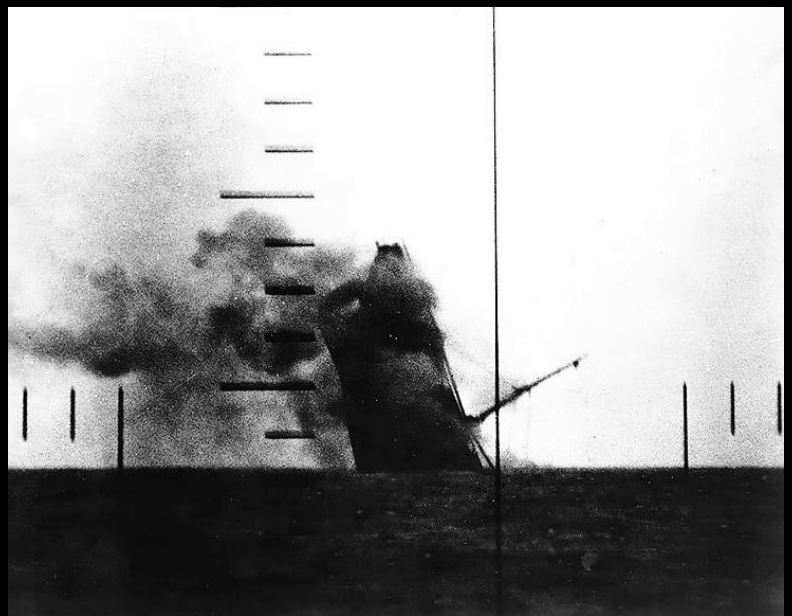
The results were instantaneous – relatively speaking. Subs that had been firing their full load to have only one weapon explode now had weapons that worked. If it didn’t explode they knew they missed.

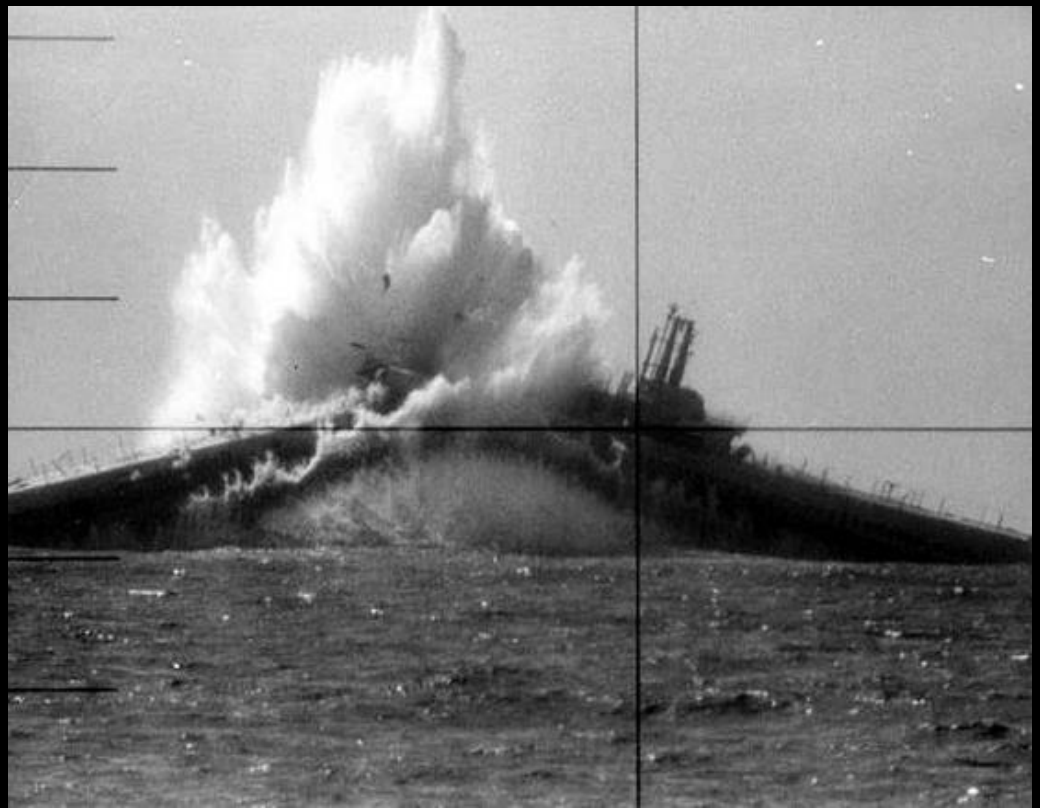
THE SILENT SERVICE



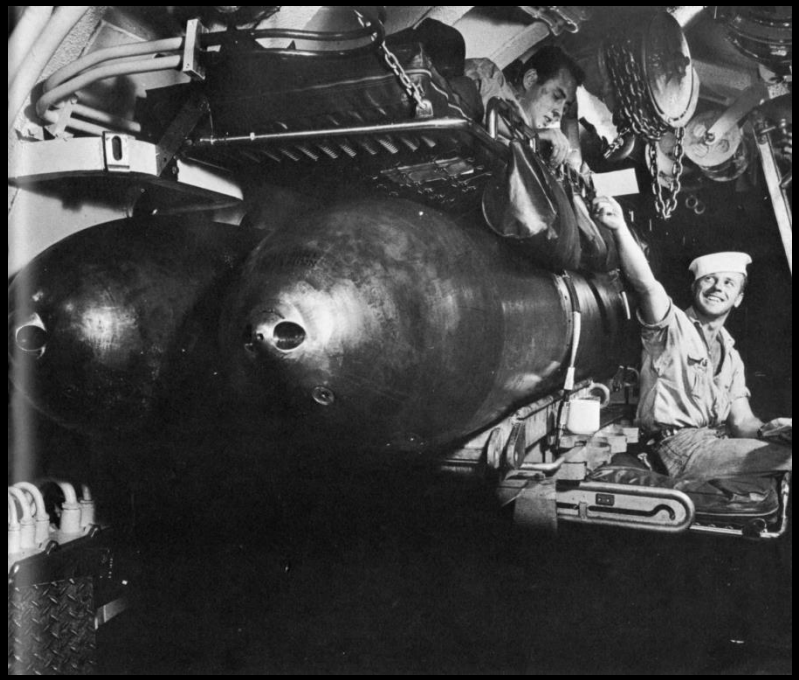
The Japanese were caught unprepared for the change. U.S. submarines had sunk ships, but not in such numbers that threatened their economy. Suddenly, their ships were sinking at an alarming rate.

They had no convoys, no escorts and they did not have time to make either effective.





THE SILENT SERVICE



The submarine service was the smallest specialty in the navy combat arms. At its peak it had about 30,000 men – less than 2% of the Navy.

Subs typically had crews of 70 – 90 men at most and room for about half that number comfortably. They were weapons system. Creature comforts were usually afterthoughts.

Although the newer boats were not as bad as the older ones. They had air conditioning and could make fresh water in limited amounts.

Still, it was not the life for everyone. There was little privacy, little time off.

And it was boring most of the time.

And deadly dangerous the rest…

THE SILENT SERVICE

About two percent of the navy served in submarines. They sank 30% of the Japanese fleet and 55% of its merchant shipping but not without cost.

It was the most lethal branch to serve in. 52 subs were lost, most with all hands. Of about 16,000 who made combat patrols in the subs, 3,506 were lost.

THE OTHER SHOESTRING

In late June 1942, a small Australian, American force landed at Milne Bay unopposed to build an air base from which they could prevent another amphibious attack on Port Moresby. By mid July, the base was up and running and defended by some 4,000 troops.

The Japanese planned to take it away but they were delayed when the Americans landed at Guadalcanal…

THE OTHER SHOESTRING

On Aug 25, the Japanese landed about 1,900 men figuring that would be more than enough to deal with the situation…

THE OTHER SHOESTRING

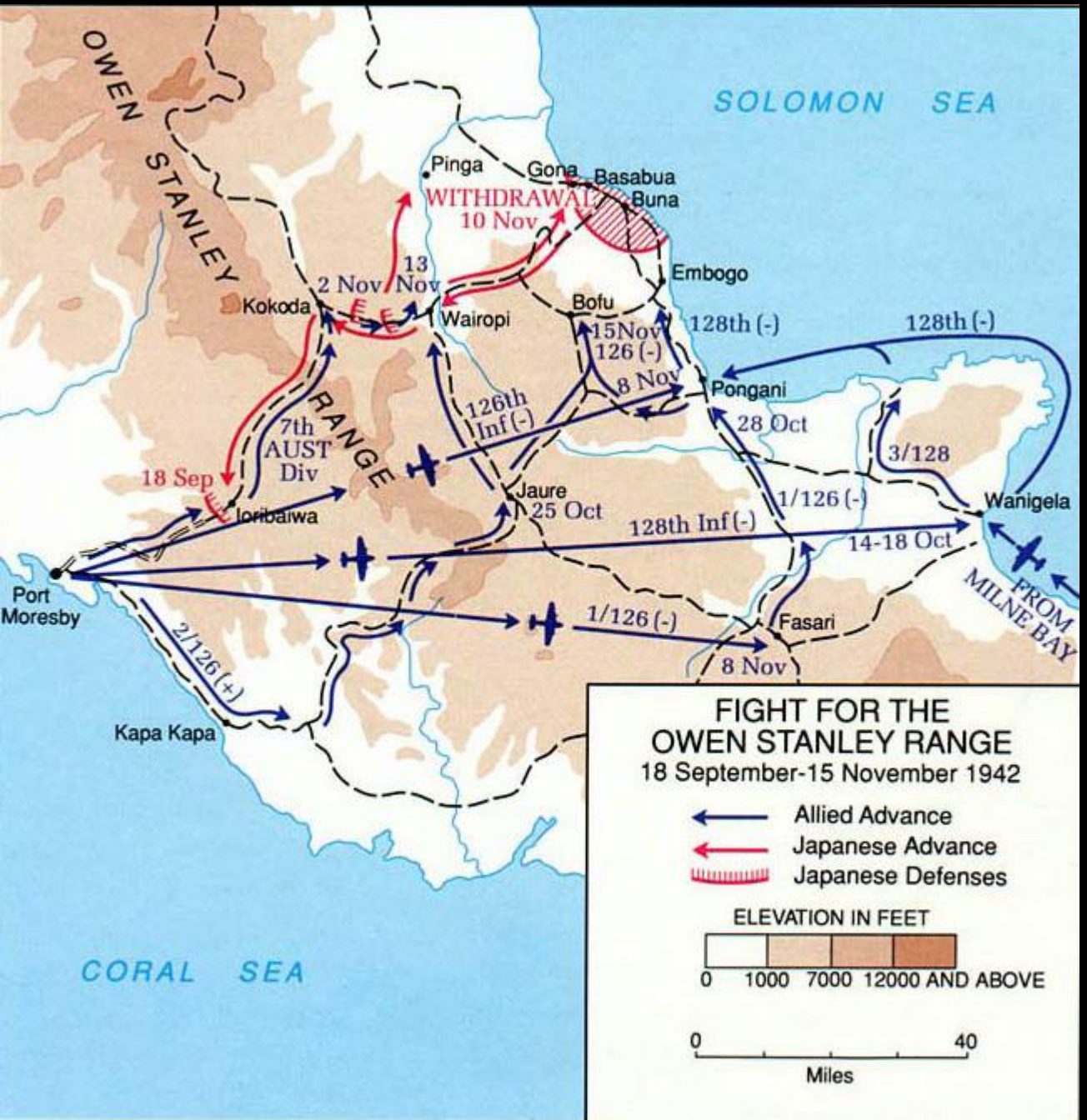
It was hardly enough and after three weeks, and suffering heavy casualties, and learning reinforcement was nowhere in sight, the Japanese evacuated to the nearby (and unoccupied) Woodlark Islands only to be driven off a few months later.

They lost about half their force in the end.

The defenders lost 181 men, about a quarter of the Japanese losses.

Japan was stretched thin trying to fight on Guadalcanal and still advancing overland on Port Moresby. But again, they underestimated their enemy and overestimate themselves.

THE OTHER SHOESTRING



When the Japanese were forced to give up their attempt overland at Port Moresby, MacArthur went on the offensive using all the few tools he had.

The Australian 7th Division pursued the retreating Japanese along the Kokoda Track.

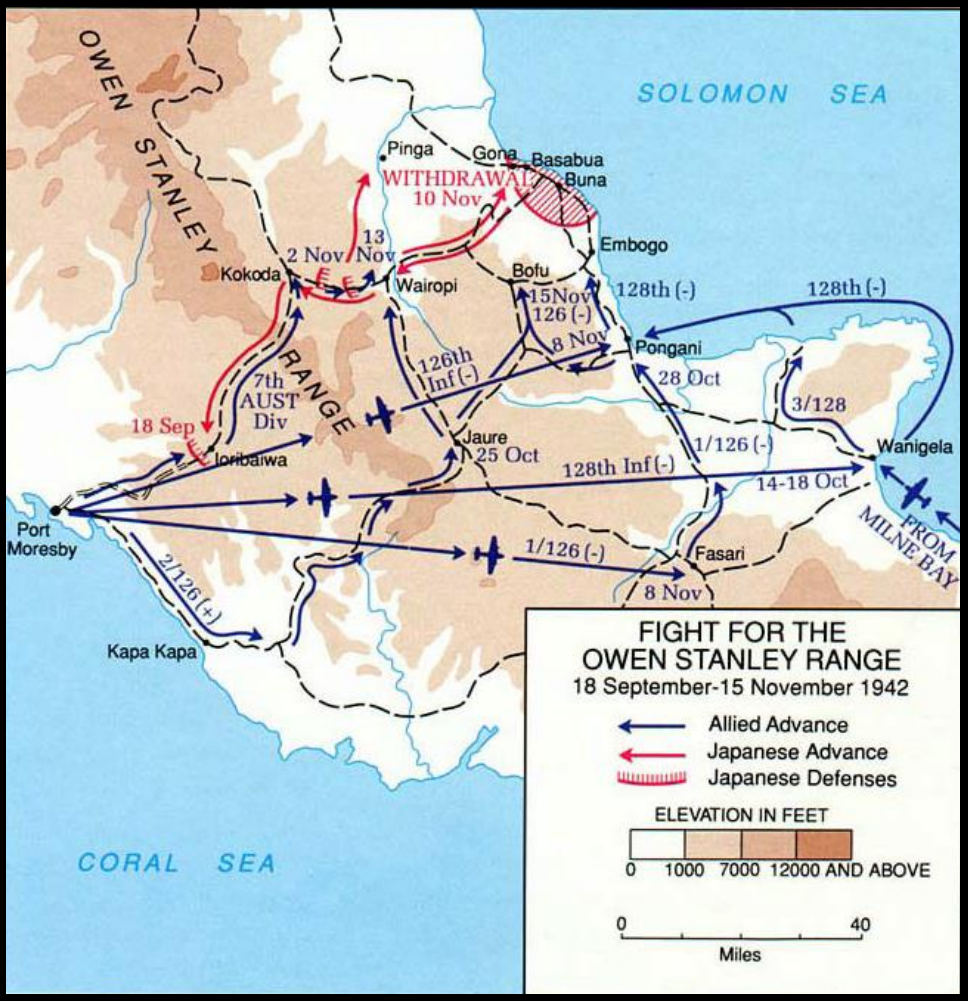
The American 32nd Infantry Division was airlifted to Port Moresby and Milne Bay to attack the Japanese on the flank.

It took two months to set up the final moves…

THE OTHER SHOESTRING

The track was no easier going the other way, but the Aussies were better supplied and prepared than the Japanese had been and had the help of the Papuans. Moreover, there were airfields that once captured were used to resupply.

THE OTHER SHOESTRING



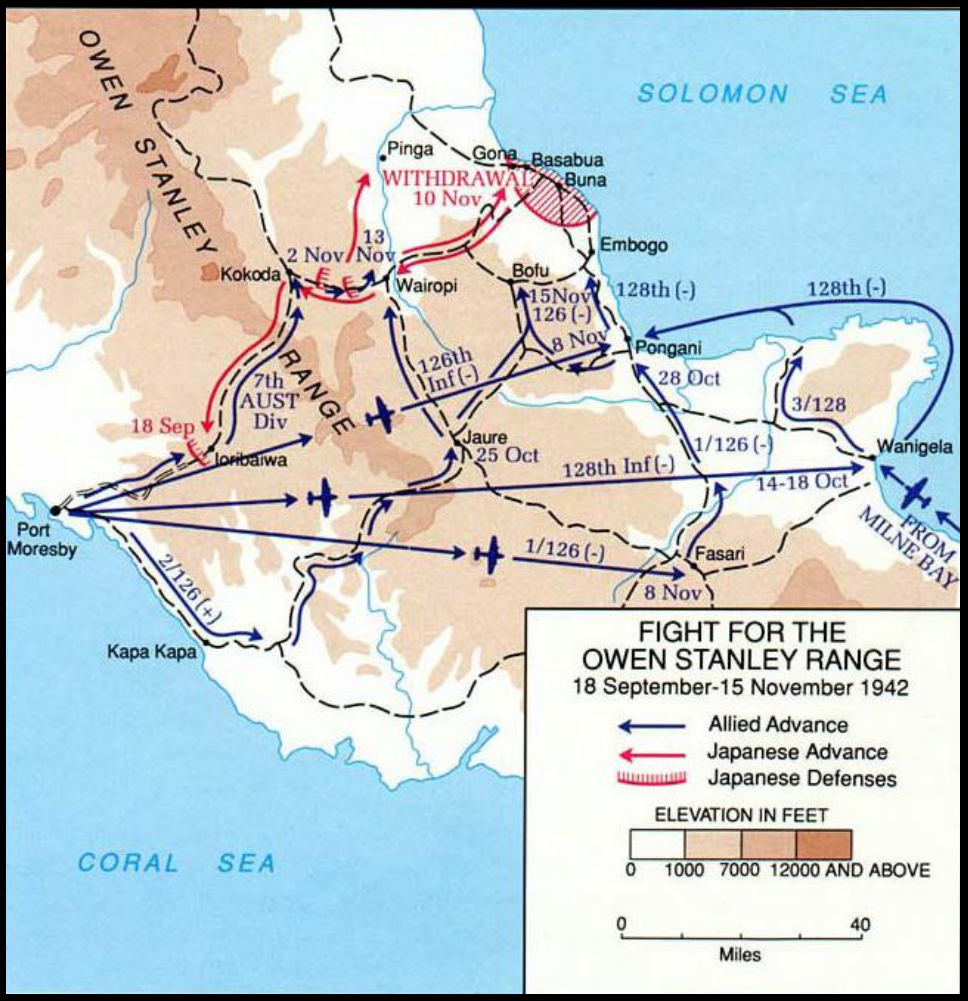
While it made perfect military sense to pursue the retreating Japanese back along the Kokoda track, that track was mostly single file. The "front" was one man wide at many points and moving divisions – 30,000 men or more – that way was less than ideal.

MacArthur's solution looked great … on paper.

He sent a U.S. battalion from the 32nd Division from Port Morsbey on foot over the Owen-Stanley range by a different trail that on their bad maps looked easier.

It was worse. For most of the trail, there was no trail. It took the battalion weeks to cross and once over the range they were too exhausted and sick to fight anything.

THE OTHER SHOESTRING



The rest of the Division did not avoid hacking their way through jungle just to get close enough to hear the guns. Some were flown to crude airfields and then had to push through the jungles and swamps, others then had to board anything that floated – PT Boats, Landing Craft, Fishing Boats even sail boats to land closer to the fight.

While not as exhausted or sick as their comrades who crossed the mountains, they were not truly combat ready.

They never were. The 32nd Division was a National Guard Division shipped to Australia with little prior training and who had spent their time there guarding supplies, not preparing to fight but to MacArthur they were Americans and did not need to.

THE OTHER SHOESTRING

By November 15th, the Americans and Australians had linked up and cornered the Japanese at Buna-Gona. The entire campaign from the Japanese landing in July to November 15th had cost the Allies 625 KIA, 1,055 WIA and over 4,000 malaria cases.

The Japanese lost 6,600 – half of their force including their general and his staff.

THE OTHER SHOESTRING

The Marines on Guadalcanal entered the fight without artillery at first because their ships had been poorly packed and there was not enough time to repack them properly so the big guns were left in New Zealand.

The 32nd Division left its artillery behind because MacArthur believed it unnecessary because Gen Kenny believed his air force was all they needed (never mind night and cloud cover, all too common in New Guinea meant the planes were mostly left behind as well.)

The U.S. Army relied upon its artillery and had since its foundation. It was not prepared to fight a battle without artillery support because no one had seen that as a battle worth fighting. That lack of firepower is one of the worst avoidable miscalculations of the war.

THE OTHER SHOESTRING

It is debatable whether disease was the other one. In 1942, the Australian Army accepted it and planned for it. The Americans had not.

Disease inflicted more attrition on the U.S. (and Australians) than the Japanese could have hoped to achieve. Five times as many soldiers were sent to the hospitals in the rear (Australia, New Caledonia) for disease rather than enemy action and unlike the European Theater, it was not for venereal disease.

Decades later, a man remembered his father reading a magazine and checking off things on the page. He father had been a medic in New Guinea during the war. The article listed the top ten deadliest diseases known. He had contracted six of the ten during his time in New Guinea.

The most common was malaria. Most came down with that at some point.

The deadliest was something know as scrub typhus. It looked like typhus, but it was not and arguably it was worse. There was no vaccine nor treatment beyond treating symptoms. It had a high mortality rate (30% in hospital, >60% otherwise) and no one in the west had seen it before nor knew what caused it.

(It was cause by a form of chigger.) To date there is no vaccine.

THE OTHER SHOESTRING

What followed was two months of intermittent fighting against the Japanese at Buna-Gona. With Guadalcanal effectively written off following the naval battles, the Japanese were able to reinforce their positions at Buna.

The Allies had to contend with supply difficulties. MacArthur still lacked a significant amphibious ability. Airlift worked but only to the airfields. Beyond lay a theater with no roads and plenty of swamps.

And the Japanese were dug in, something it seemed they could do well.

And Malaria continued to be a problem.

MacArthur fired the commander of the 32nd Division in frustration.

THE OTHER SHOESTRING

LGEN Robert Eichelberger was placed in overall command of the Americans which now included part of the 41st Infantry Division. Eichelberger and his staff had been slated for Europe and had been sent to MacArthur instead in late August. He did not like MacArthur and was not thrilled with the assignment.

THE OTHER SHOESTRING

Eichelberger had been in Australia long enough to know the American troops were not trained for the war in front of them and were disturbingly overconfident.

MacArthur just wanted the job done – no excuses. He told Eichelberger to fire anyone and everyone who would not fight, to take Buna or not to come back alive.

It was probably more drama than a true order. He would relieve several officers even putting an only recently promoted Captain in command of a battalion.

The battle cost the 32nd Division three commanders: one was fired and two were wounded. Eichelberger was the Corps commander but there being no other generals, he commanded the division personally.

THE OTHER SHOESTRING

The battle was declared over on January 22nd, 1943 when no one was able to find any live Japanese to shoot at.

The Americans and Australians had suffered 1,991 KIA and over 12,300 had to be evacuated – most for malaria. The Japanese evacuated 1,200 wounded. Close to 9,000 others had died and in the end they had resorted to cannibalism. A small number managed to escape to the west in terrible condition.

Compared to the fighting that would soon take place in Tunisia and later in Europe, Buna-Gona was not particularly costly.

MacArthur thought otherwise. It had cost more than it should have and took far too long. He began to wonder whether there was an easier way…

THE SOUTH PACIFIC - 1943

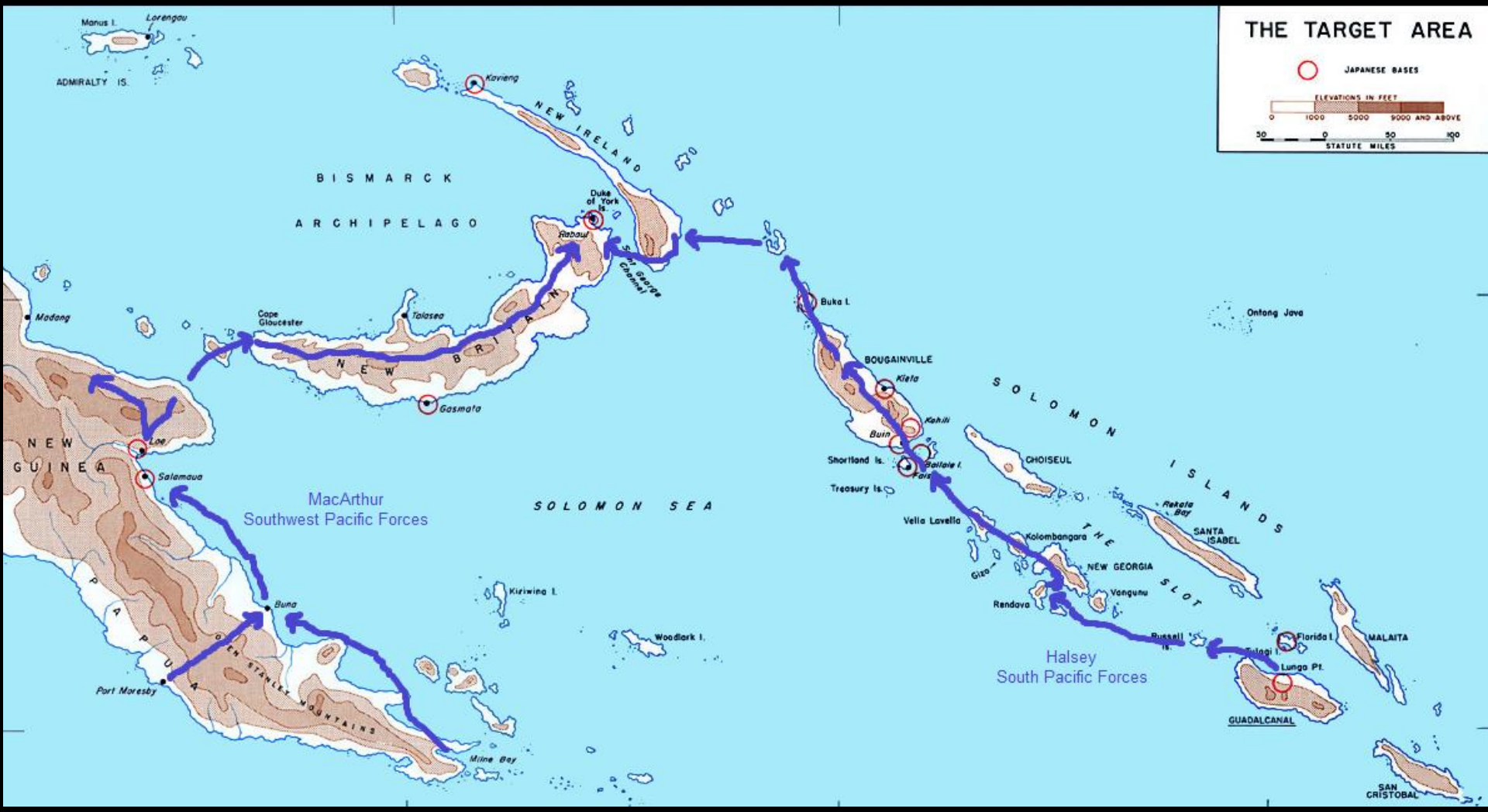
Following the Casablanca Conferece, the Joint Chiefs looked at the future in the Pacific. Guadalcanal was secure and the initial fight in New Guinea was over. They ordered MacArthur and Nimitz to prepare a plan for the reduction of Rabaul.

This meant MacArthur would have to work with the Navy, something that seemed unlikely. MacArthur had said some very unkind things about the Navy after the Philippines and had been pessimistic (and peevish) about Guadalcanal.

Halsey, who was sent to coordinate with MacArthur, did not think much of the general. He thought the man was so much hot air.

The two would get along famously much to Halsey's surprise (and arguably King's chagrin.)

THE SOUTH PACIFIC - 1943



The general plan was called Operation Cartwheel designed to take Rabaul and eventually Kavieng. MacArthur's forces would move by way of New Guinea and New Britain, Haley's would move up the Solomon Islands. At this time (early 1943) they expected to take and hold all the ground between them and the objective.

THE SOUTH PACIFIC - 1943

Neither was ready yet. Shipping was a problem for both. And carriers were in very short reply.

And supplies were not what either command thought adequate. They wanted the stuff in theater and at hand before they went forward in force and not hope for a trickle from the U.S. as the advance was in progress.

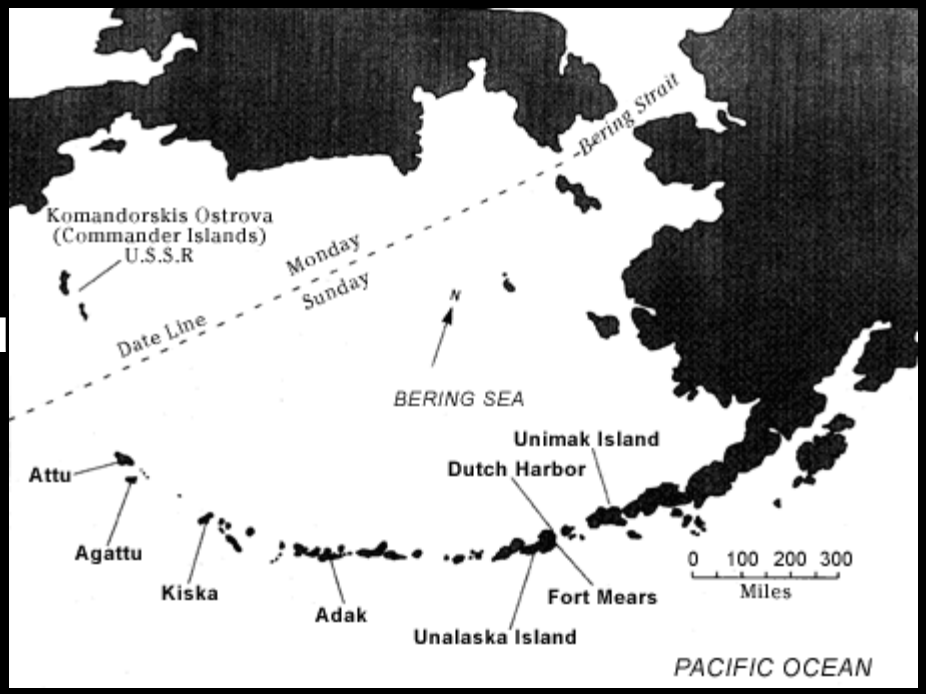
Through April, their operations were limited to taking unoccupied islands that would provide places for airfields and forward supply bases.

They had planned to move in April, but a coordinated effort would not be possible until June due to the materiel situation. Something had more immediate priority.

THE ALEUTIANS CAMPAIGN

The Japanese had taken the Aleutian Islands of Attu and Kiska in June of 1942 as part of the Midway Operation. They had no idea what to do next.

Neither did the United States. No one had lived there but it was U.S. territory.



THE ALEUTIANS CAMPAIGN

The U.S. was not prepared to retake the islands and many wondered whether such a venture was worth it.

The islands were of negligible strategic importance beyond having isolated Japanese garrisons.

But they could not be ignored. That would not play well in the press.

So the Army began an intense bombing campaign, arguably the most difficult air offensive of the war.

It was not a friendly place to fly even without enemy planes around.

THE ALEUTIANS CAMPAIGN

The Aleutians have arguably about the worst weather in the world. It has basically two season:

Wet, cold and miserable, and

Just absolutely viciously cold with far too much snow.

Bombers had to bomb into clouds hoping they would it something.

THE ALEUTIANS CAMPAIGN

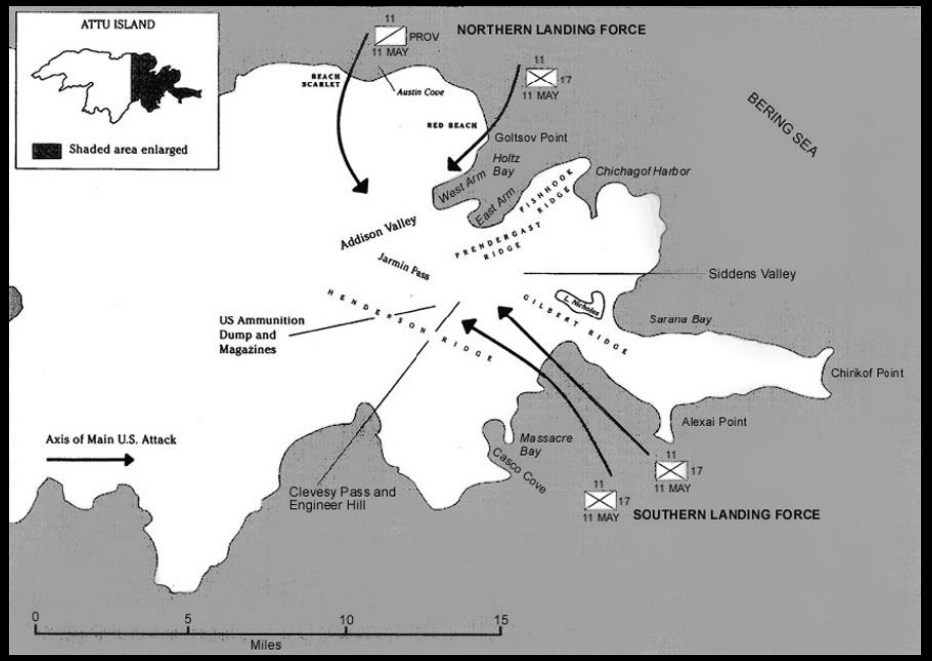
The operation achieved little unless one concedes that the Japanese went no further. They had not really planned to do so. Japan took the islands because they feared the U.S. might use them as bases to bomb Japan.

The U.S. had already considered and rejected that idea. By 1943, they decided the air campaign was too costly to continue.

THE INVASION OF ATTU

Which meant Attu and Kiska had to be taken. Attu was first. It would be invaded by a Regimental Combat Team from the 7th Infantry Division – about 6,000 men who were trained and equipped for North Africa. They faced about 3,000 Japanese.

The Navy now found a use for its old battleships as they and heavy cruisers provided fire support for the invasion. The troops landed on May 11th, 1943.



THE INVASION OF ATTU

The conditions were terrible. Temperatures were only barely above freezing during the days and below at night.

Fog was a constant.

And the island provided very little cover unless the troops dug in – and the Japanese had.

THE INVASION OF ATTU

While the landing went well, the fighting was bitter in many places, made worse by the conditions. More Americans succumbed to frostbite or trench foot than to enemy action. But there was plenty of the latter – more than the American planners had bargained for.

THE INVASION OF ATTU

The fighting lasted until the end of May. The Japanese considered a relief mission with a force of four carriers, three battleships, seven cruisers and 11 destroyers, but the Japanese garrison was wiped out before the fleet could complete preparations.

THE INVASION OF ATTU

The Americans suffered through the first “Banzai Charge” Like all the future ones while terrifying it was a wasted effort. Of the nearly 3,000 Japanese, only 29 survived the battle.

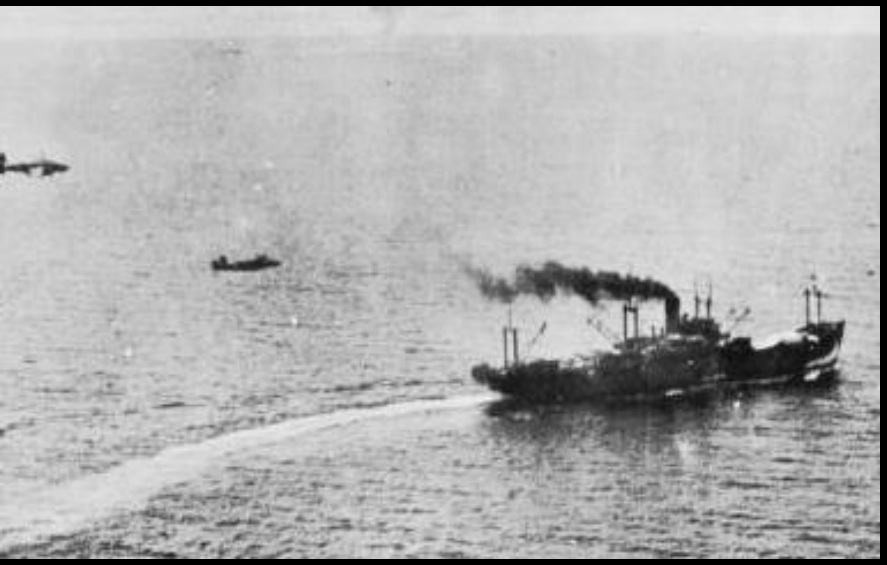
The Americans lost 549 KIA and 1,148 WIA, more than they had planned. They decided they needed to overwhelm their next objective.

KISKA – AUGUST 1943

On August 15th 1943, the entire 7th ID plus a Canadian Brigade landed on Kiska. The Japanese had evacuated under cover of fog only days before.

The only fighting was in the fog when the Americans and Canadians (who had landed on opposite sides of the island) mistook each other for Japanese. 32 were dead and about 50 were wounded.

BISMARCK SEA - 1943



Neither MacArthur nor Halsey were ready for major operations but that did not mean they were idle.

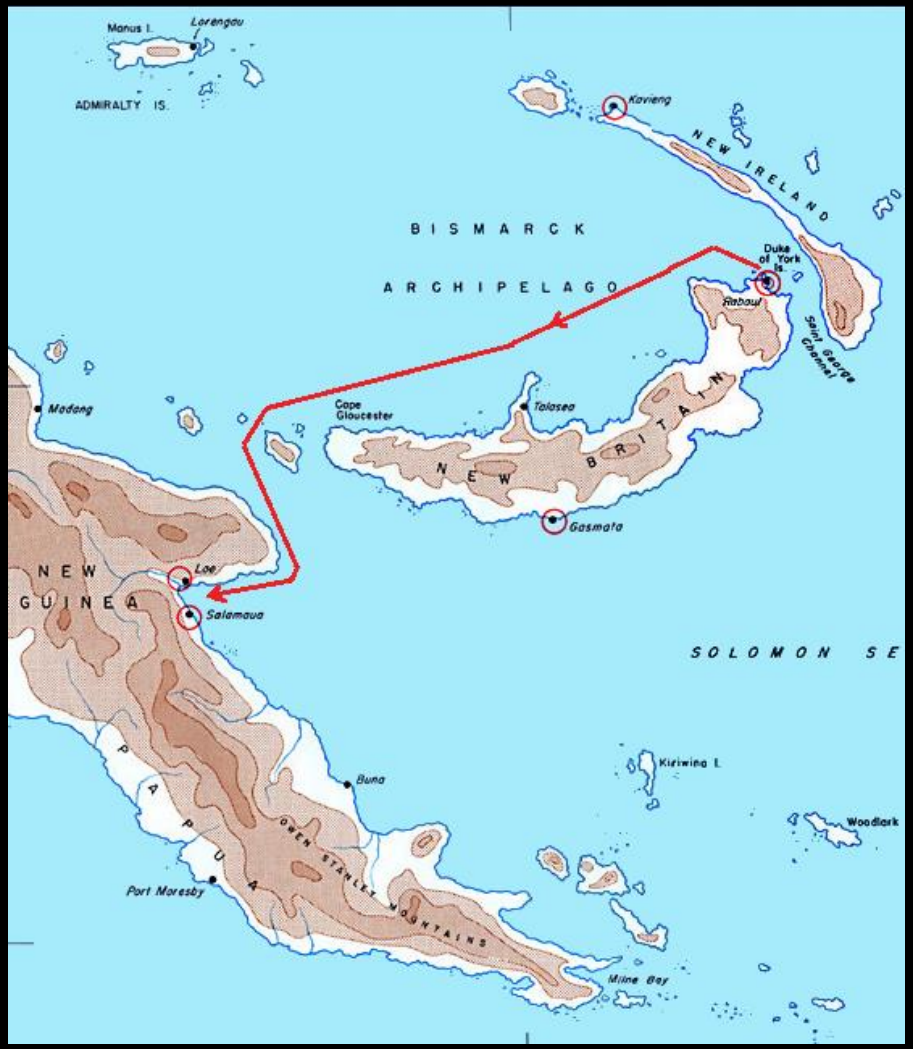
Their air forces were engaged almost daily in bombing missions, fighter sweeps and in defending against Japanese air attacks.

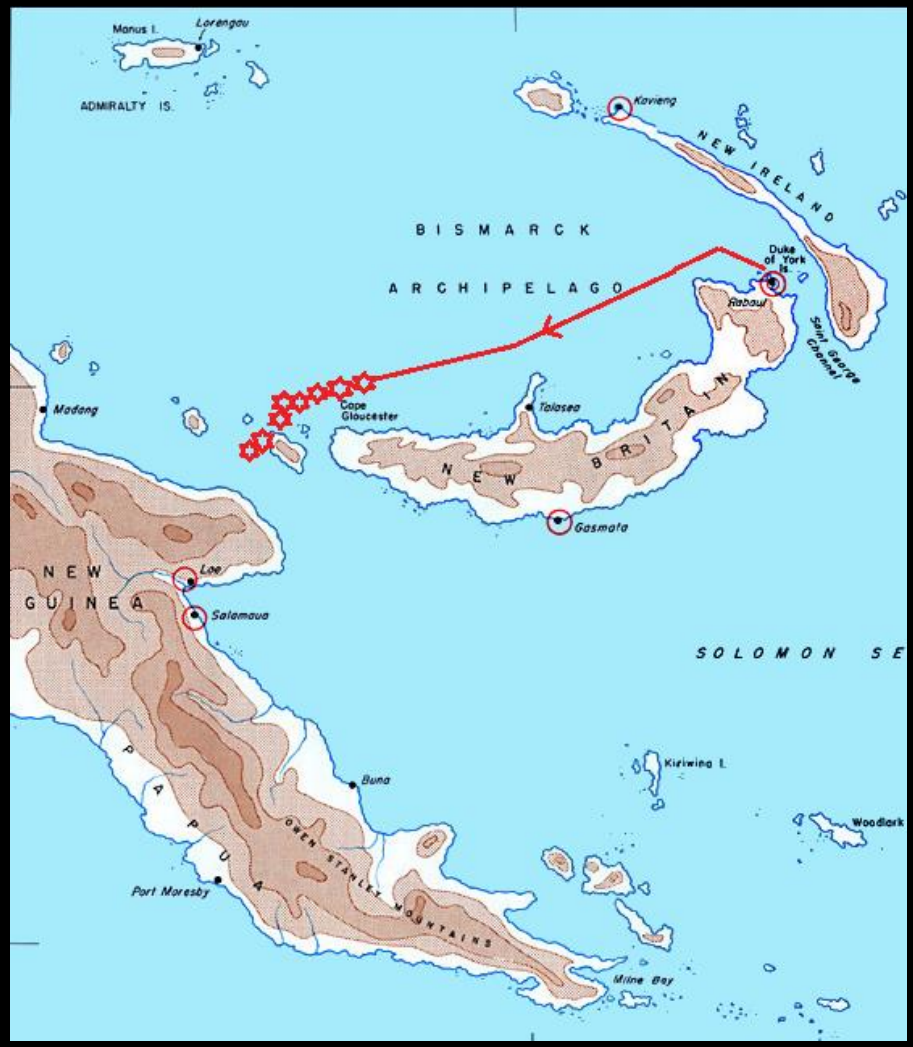
And neither was about to allow the Japanese to reinforce any of their immediate objectives.

In early March, code breakers learned the Japanese planned a major convoy to Lae, New Guinea – MacArthur's next major objective. They knew what ships would be departing Rabaul when and their probable course.

LGEN Kenney was prepared to deal with the convoy once it sailed.

BISMARCK SEA - 1943





BISMARCK SEA - 1943

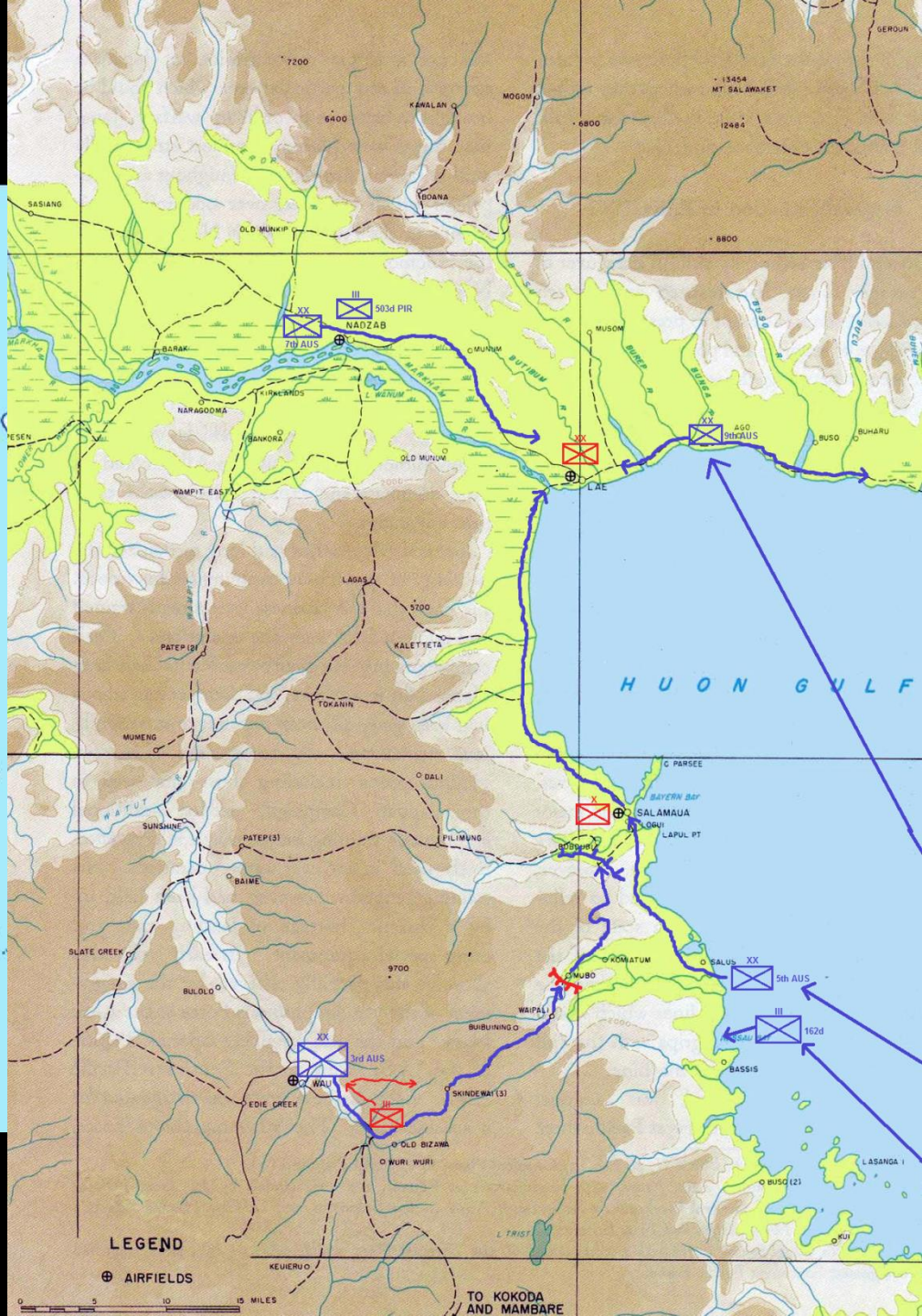
8 transports with a about 7,000 troops left Rabaul for Lae on February 28th 1943. They had an escort of 8 destroyers. By March 2nd, they were in range of medium bombers and fighters of Kenney's 5th Air Force in New Guinea. Between then and the 4th, the convoy was under repeated attack during the day.

All 8 transports were sunk along with 4 of the destroyers.

About 1,200 troops made it to New Guinea without any equipment or supplies. About 3,000 drowned in the Bismarck Sea aboard the sinking transports. The remainder were rescued and returned to Rabaul without their equipment or supplies.

The Japanese would not send their transports anywhere near New Guinea for the rest of the war.

LAE NEW GUINEA



LAE NEW GUINEA - 1943

MacArthur had begun a slow pursuit of the Japanese not long after the Buna-Gona battle. The Australians had established a base a Wau – by air – by January ’43 and the Japanese tried to drive them off and failed. The Australian 3rd Division (at Wau) was ordered to pursue towards the Japanese base at Salamaua.

By April 22nd, the division had reached Mubo and eventually drove the Japanese back on Salamaua, taking the high ground.

The Japanese reinforced with troops from the north and tried to drive the Australians back and failed with heavy losses.

Through July, they tightened their hold on the ground surrounding Salamaua.

LAE NEW GUINEA - 1943

In the first days of July, the 162nd Regimental Combat Team made an unopposed landing by PT boat and landing craft from Buna at Nassau Bay on the Australian right flank. They moved north and fought off a determined counter-attack at "Roosevelt Ridge" named after the commander who won the fight: LTC Archibald Roosevelt, youngest son of President Theodore Roosevelt.

The landing allowed the 5th Australian Division to follow and get organized to relieve the 3rd Australian Division which it did on August 23rd.

The 5th Division took over to continue to press towards nearby Salamaua against determined but somewhat ineffective resistance. Salamaua fell on Sep. 11th.

LAE NEW GUINEA - 1943

The primary objective was Lae. On September 4th, the Australian 9th Infantry Division landed East of Lae.

The landings were not opposed by Japanese troops but were attacked by bombers from Rabaul and Wewak, New Guinea.

The 9th Division was stopped at the Busu river just east of Lae. While there were Japanese on the other side, the main reason was they did not have bridging equipment. On September 9th, they forded the river under fire and secured the far side. Bridging equipment arrived on the 13th.

This was the first major amphibious operation by the Australians since the disaster at Gallipoli in 1915.

LAE NEW GUINEA - 1943

The day after the Aussies came by sea, the Americans came by air. The 503rd PIR dropped on Nadzab east of Lae unopposed and seized the airfield. It was considered the riskiest of the operations and MacArthur flew along in a B-17.

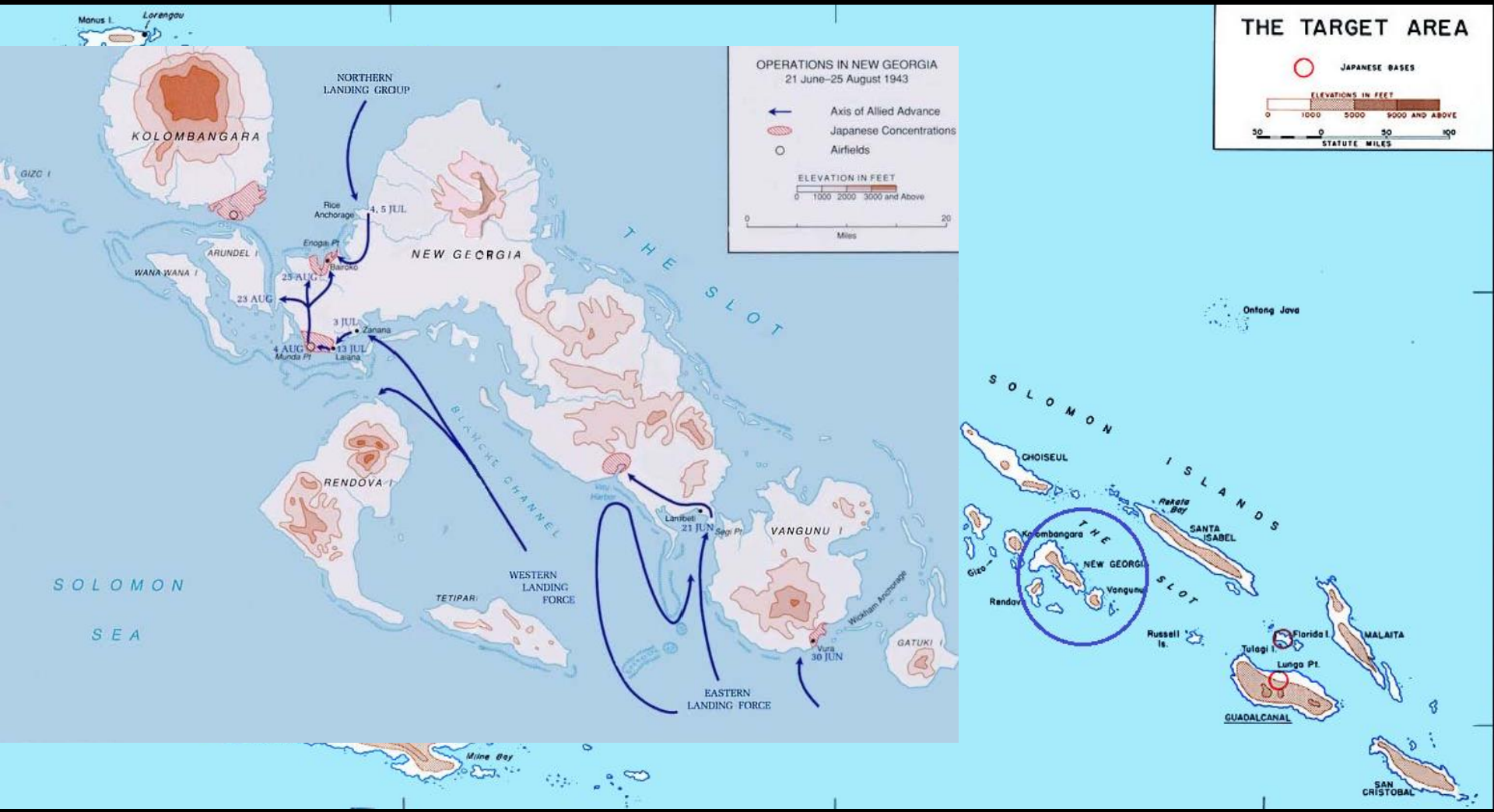
It went without difficulties and the 7th Australian Division began arriving and Nazab by air the next day. The Japanese were almost surrounded…

LAE NEW GUINEA - 1943

With three divisions (plus two American Regiments) pressing in from three sides, the Japanese retreated in the only direction left – north into the jungle. Lae fell on September 16th.

The Japanese had suffered 11,600 casualties. The Allies 2,249.

The Central Solomons – 1943



NEW GEORGIA – 1943

New Georgia and its surrounding islands held over 20,000 Japanese troops and a couple of air bases that were being used to bomb the Americans on Guadalcanal.

It was an initial target of Operation Cartwheel for Halsey's forces

NEW GEORGIA – 1943

The Japanese Army and Navy disagreed about how to stop the Americans in the Solomons. The Army wanted to concentrate its efforts on Bougainville. The Navy wanted to stop the Americans in the New Georgia Islands and maintain their airfields there.

They went their own way.

The Americans made their initial landings on June 21st to tie down the Japanese to the south and rescue the coast watchers in the area. On June 30th, they took Rendova without much of a fight. The island was close to the main landing zones and ideally suited for artillery to support the landings.

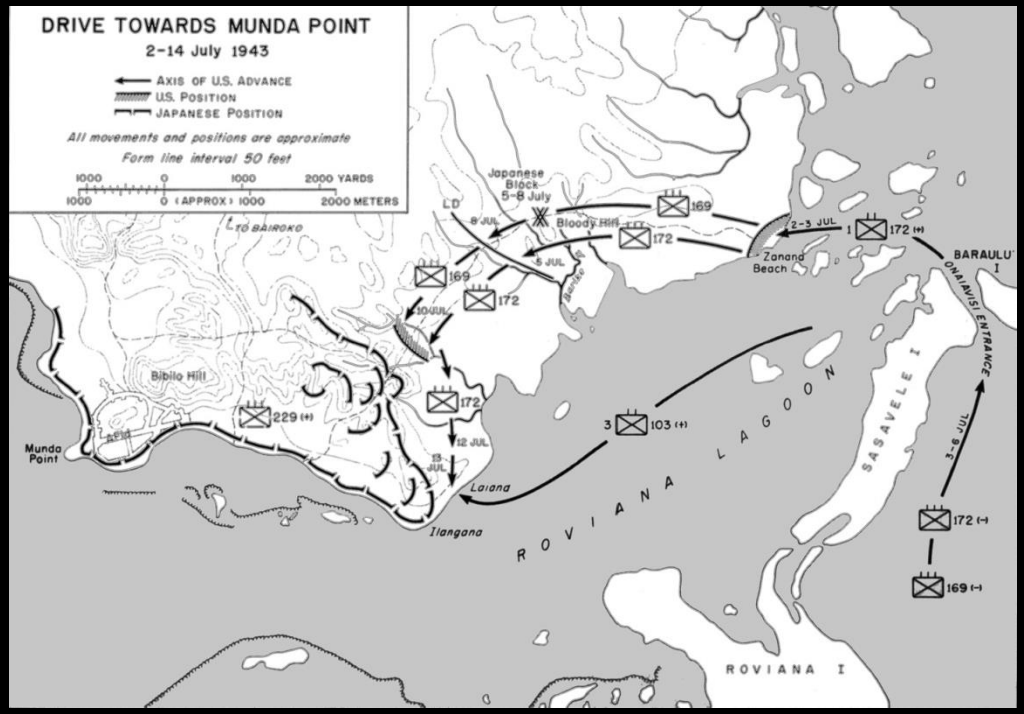
NEW GEORGIA – 1943

The main assault landed on July 2nd. Its objective was the airfield and Munda Point less than two miles from its landing zone. The mission went to two regiments of the 43rd Infantry Division.

The beach was chosen because it was lightly defended and chosen over a better beach a half mile from the airfield, but which was believed to be heavily defended.

There were no roads and terrible terrain. What was worse was the division had no training in jungle warfare which is predominantly an infantry fight.

The division brought its vehicles.



NEW GEORGIA – 1943

Particularly its tanks and it went by the book. The tanks were to support the infantry and that meant they had to be up front to do so.

If the tanks stopped, so did the infantry and thus the entire advance.

The Japanese commander had no illusions nor did he see this fight as one with no recourse. He knew his line of retreat was mostly open – across the small gulf to Kolombangara Island. He fought a delaying action and learned delay the tanks and the whole advance is delayed.

And that was easy. The tanks could not deploy into the swamps. Stop the lead tank and all were stopped. The on-scene commander stuck to the book.

NEW GEORGIA – 1943

At first Halsey thought the commander was overworked and sent in another general to run the big picture so the 43rd Division commander could focus on the division. When that did not work, the division commander was fired on July 29th.

The new commander ignored his tanks. The infantry went forward without them.

The Japanese gave ground grudgingly, but they did fall back.

On August 4th, the airfield fell – weeks behind schedule. On August 25th, the island was secure.

Most of the Japanese had escaped to Kolombangara which now had close to 30,000 defenders.

NEW GEORGIA – 1943

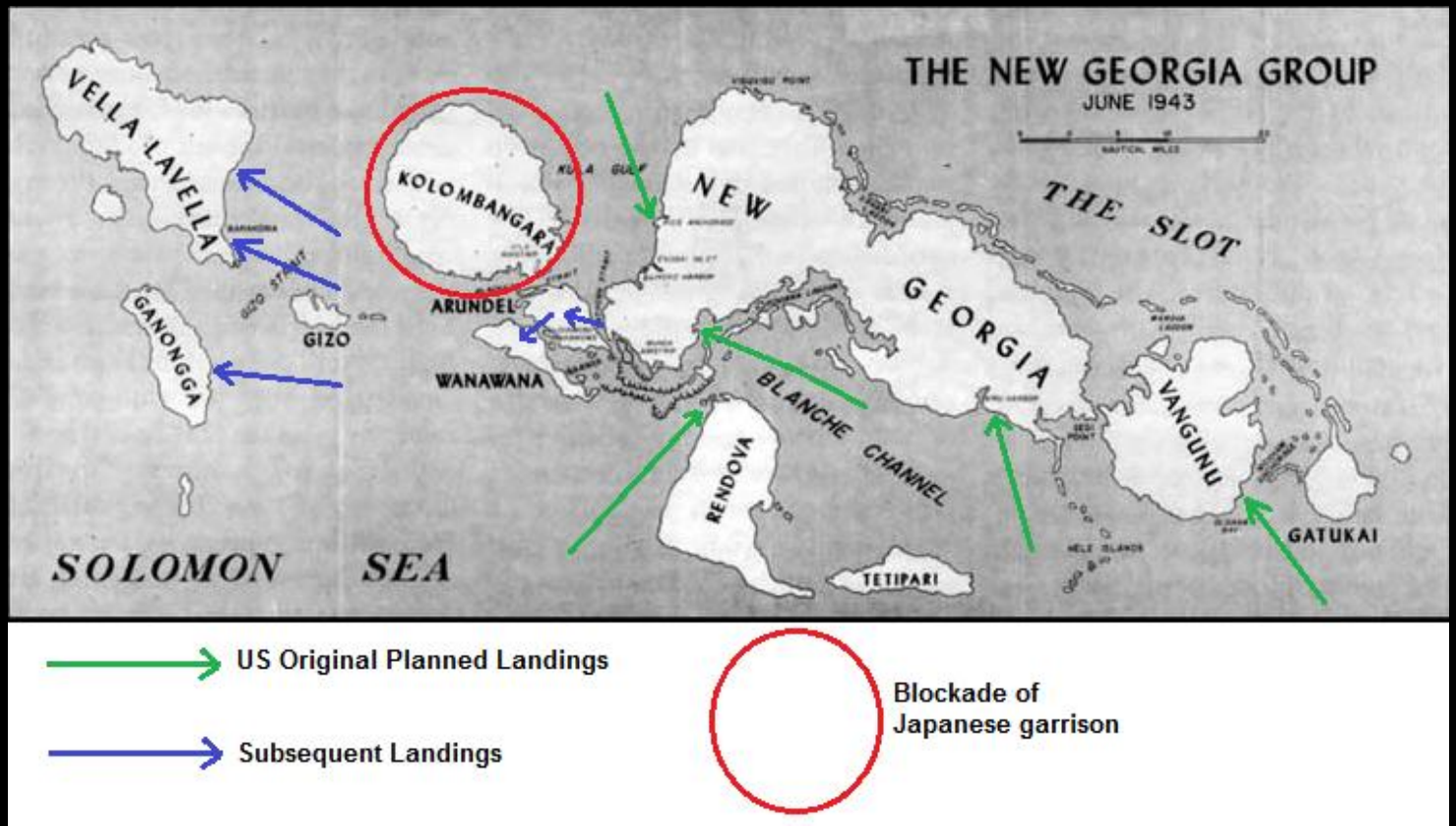
The Americans lost 1,100 KIA and 4,000 WIA. The Japanese lost of 2,500 including a significant loss of officers but some 6,000 had escaped to Kolombangara Island.

The campaign made Halsey and his staff abandon their plan to take all islands and defeat all Japanese.

NEW GEORGIA – 1943

Halsey had been looking for alternatives. Even before New Georgia was secured he had scouts on the outer islands of Vella Lavella and Ganongga to determine the strength of the Japanese. He knew there were at least 20,000 on Kolombangara (even without the troops who would evacuate there from New Georgia) and he decided to bypass the island and isolate it.

There were maybe 600 Japanese on the islands to the west. He would take those and blockade the larger garrison.



NEW GEORGIA – 1943

The Allies landed on Vella Lavella on August 15th, 1943. The force consisted of a Marine regiment and a regiment of New Zealanders.

The Marines took ground best suited for airfields and were followed almost immediately by Navy Seabees who had the fields up and running by the beginning of September.

The New Zealanders took care of the minor Japanese infestation, although it took two months before the last Japanese had been eliminated.

The reason was it was a large island and there were so few Japanese. They had to be hunted down.

NAVAL ACTIONS

The fighting on New Georgia brought the Navy into close proximity with the Japanese attempts to resupply and reinforce both New Georgia and Kolombangara. While the island land campaign was in progress, cruisers and destroyers clashed in the waters around Kolombangara as the U.S. tried to disrupt Japan's supply effort.

Four battles were fought, all at night. The net tactical effect was a draw. But the Japanese effort had no impact on the ground war thus overall it was a U.S. success.

The good news was the U.S. Navy was now able to fight the Japanese at night and with torpedoes that worked.

The bad news: the Japanese torpedoes worked too.

NAVAL ACTIONS

Kula Gulf July 5th 1943.

U.S.	3 CL, 4 DD	1 CL sunk
Japan	10 DD	2 Sunk, 4 Damaged
	Japan resupply mission failed.	

Kolombangara July 12-13, 1943.

U.S.	3 CL, 10 DD	3 CL Damaged,
		1 DD sunk
Japan	1 CL, 5 DD, 4 TR	1 CL sunk
	Japan resupply partially successful.	

Vella Gulf, August 6 – 7, 1943.

U.S.	6 DD	
Japan	4 DD	3 DD sunk
	Japan resupply failed.	

Battle of Vella Lavella, 6 Oct 1943

U.S.	6 DD	1 DD sunk,
		2 DD damaged
Japan	9 DD	1 DD sunk
	20 supply barges	
	Japan resupply successful.	

THE AIR WAR

The Japanese did not try to engage the U.S. invasion force with their Navy. They attacked with their air forces out of Rabaul and Bougainville.

They were met by planes from USS Saratoga and the light carrier Princeton which had come south. But mostly they faced Marine Fighter Squadrons from Guadalcanal and the Russell Islands and New Georgia (by the end of July) and Vella Lavella (by mid September).

Those squadrons were equipped with the new F4U Corsairs which doubled as exceptional ground attack aircraft.

It was not an even fight. The Japanese lost 369 planes and all the crews. The U.S. lost 61 both in the air and on the ground – more on the ground than in the air.

NEW GEORGIA – 1943

The blockade idea was unconventional but so successful it was used throughout the Pacific. The blockading force consisted of PT Boats and "Black Cat" PBY Catalina's. The PBY's were painted black, radar equipped and heavily armed. They patrolled night and day, but mostly at night.

With the PT Boats they sank or drove off any vessel attempting to land on an isolated Japanese held island either to resupply the troops or to take them off.

By the end of the war, 14 squadrons of Navy PBY's had been assigned to "Black Cat" duties. There were an additional six squadrons with the Royal Australian Air Force. They were able to hold down numerous bypassed garrisons numbering in the tens of thousands of troops.

“ISLAND HOPPING”

The lengthy campaigns in New Guinea and the Central Solomons convinced both MacArthur and Halsey that Operation Cartwheel – as envisioned – would be too costly and take too long.

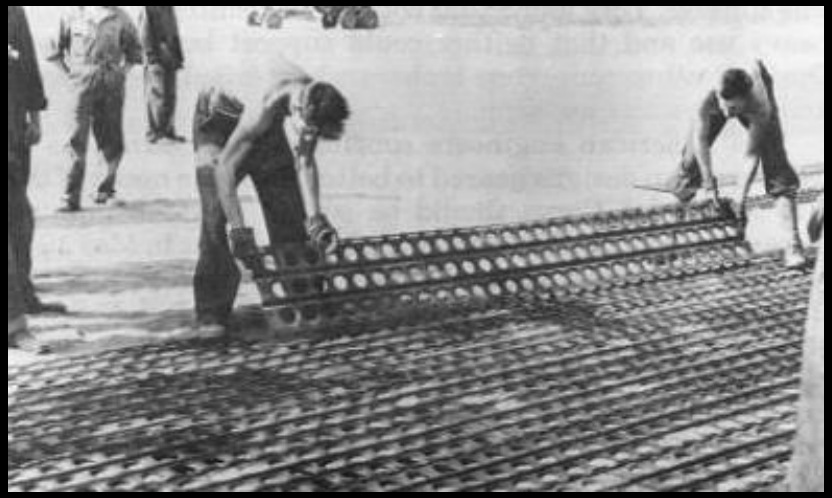
It was not necessary to go after the Japanese. Cut them off and it was as good as killing them all.

To cut them off the U.S. needed bases and airfields and it was already apparent it was easier and faster to build one from nothing than take one from the Japanese.

Both MacArthur and Halsey had seen their engineers at work and knew it was easier to build it than take it.

Halsey would say the most important weapons were the submarine, radar, airplanes and … the bulldozer.

“ISLAND HOPPING”



So the strategies changed. And when MacArthur and Halsey met in September to discuss the next phase they were already on the same page.

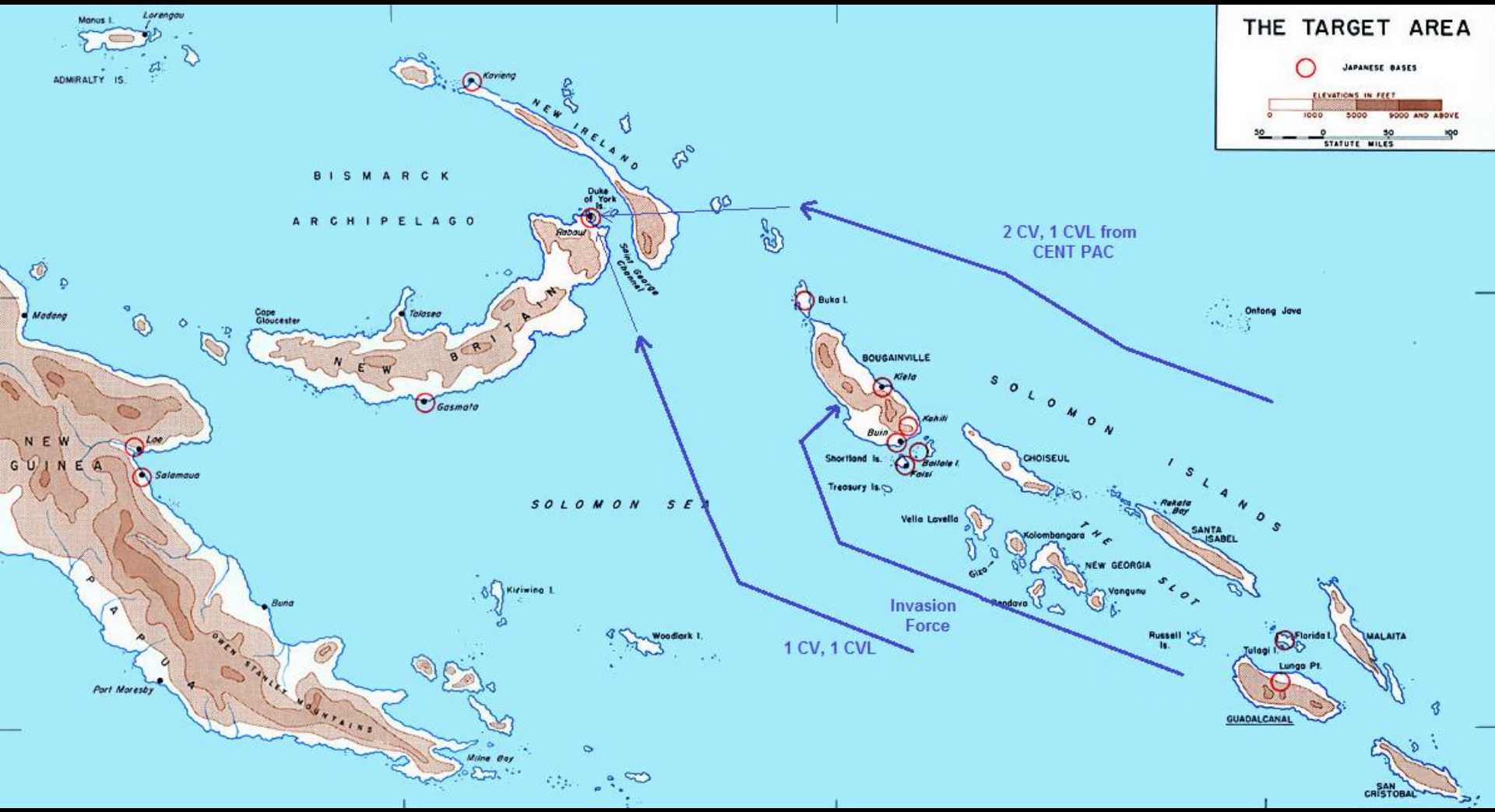
Rabaul would be cut off and isolated.

The attacks would be where the Japanese were not – or at least not where the Japanese had any strength.

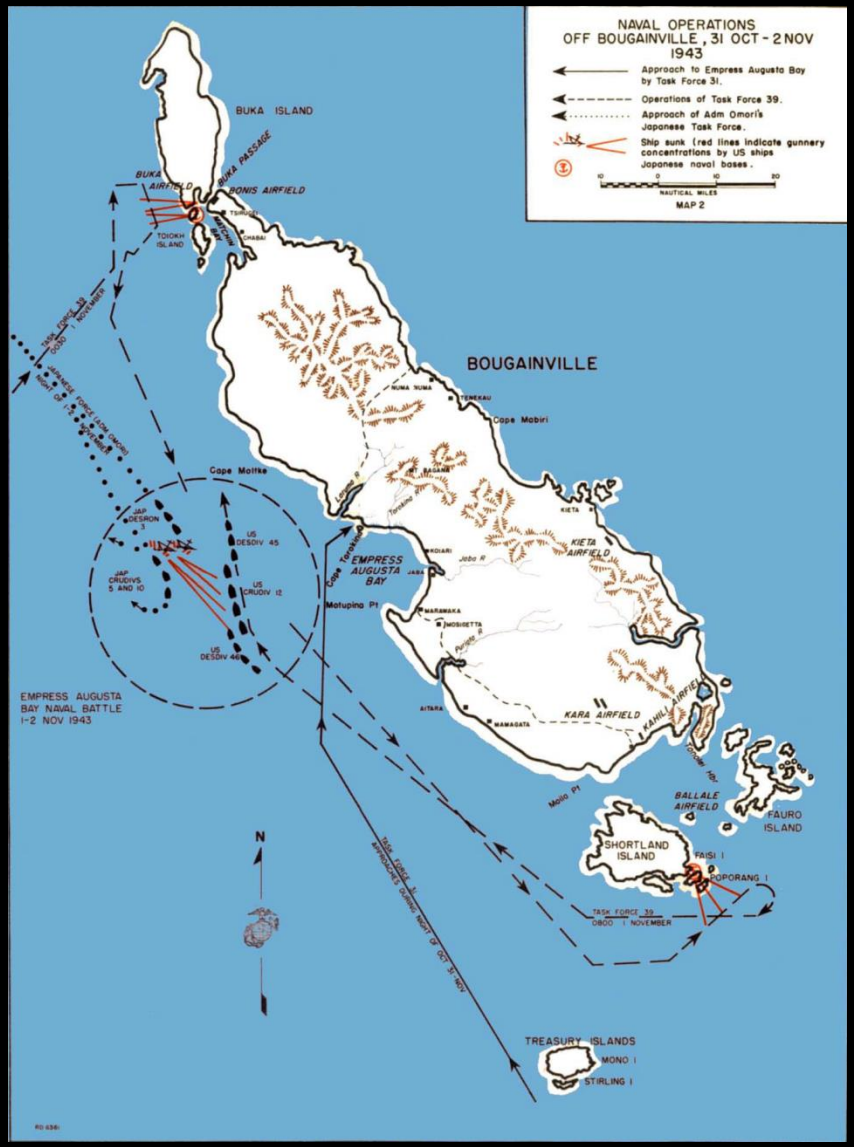
The next phase could be done without getting into a tiff with Washington but they decided to head that off, both telling their superiors taking Rabaul was off the table and unnecessary.

They would have to prove it on the ground but they were not told not to proceed as they planned for the next round.

“ISLAND HOPPING”



“ISLAND HOPPING”



The next target towards isolating Rabaul was Bougainville. The goal was not and would not be to take the island. There were, after all, over 50,000 Japanese troops almost all concentrated at the southern end.

Halsey hit at a place where there was nothing but unsupported patrols – Cape Torokina, roughly at the middle.

“ISLAND HOPPING”

The 3rd Marine Division landed on November 1st, 1943. It did not go well.

The beach was not nearly as wide as was thought. The surf was far higher than acceptable causing several landing craft to wash up on the beach, delaying the landings.

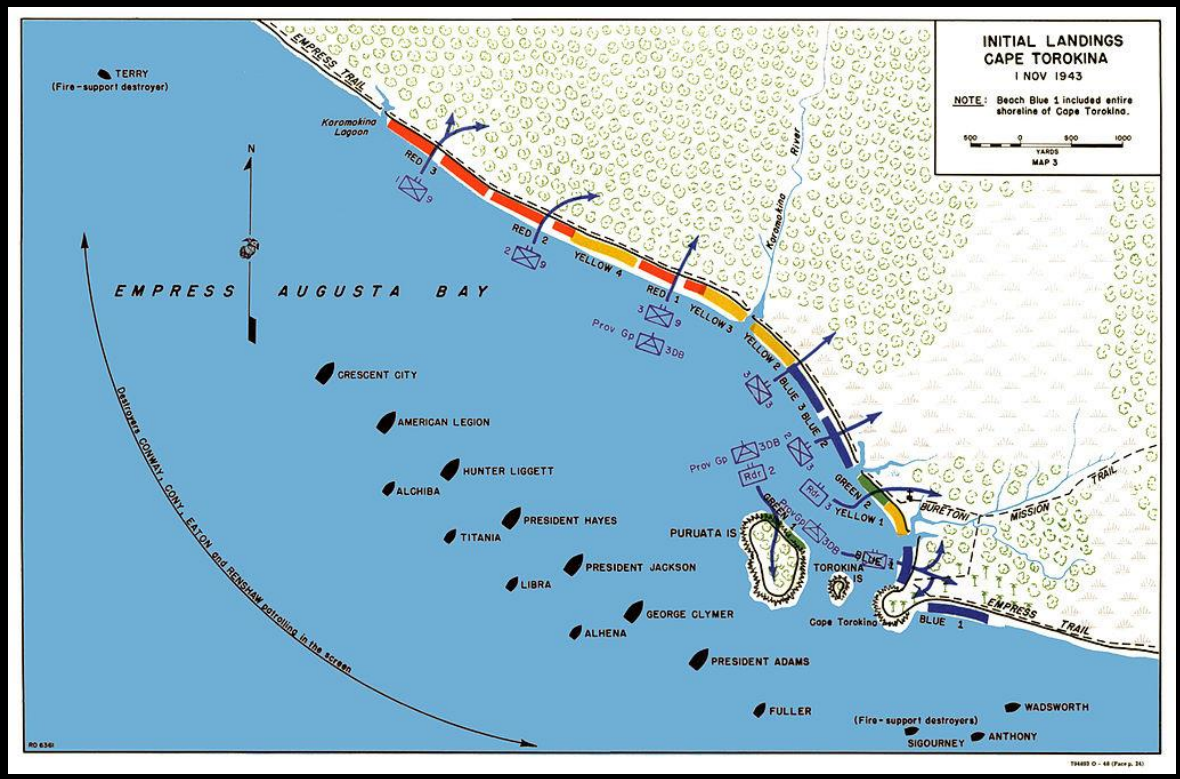
And the pre-landing bombardment had done little to the few Japanese in the area. The few guns they did have were untouched and caused problems for the Marines landing nearby. Still, the Americans landed over 7000 men in 20 minutes.

And they found out real quick that the beach was the best part.

Casualties were nothing compared to Europe or later battles. But they had been preventable for the most part.

“ISLAND HOPPING”

The heaviest initial fighting was at Cape Torokina (far right) which was the only prepared defense and had about a company of Japanese (~250 men.)



But a couple of hours after the Marines landed, four destroyers arrived at the mouth of the Koromolino River. The Americans thought they were American.

They were Japanese. They offloaded a battalion of Japanese troops and then the destroyers left the area. It would take over a week to deal with them.

The Americans could not believe Japan would try to pull off a landing in the middle of the American fleet in broad daylight.

The American Transports were only loaded to ¼ capacity but enough were there to land all the Marines and their supplies within hours of arrival.

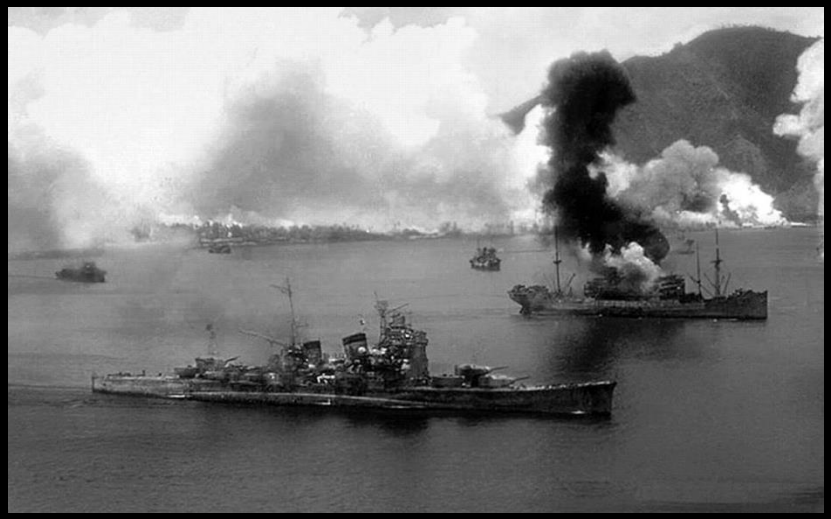
“ISLAND HOPPING”

The Japanese hoped to land a counter force nearby before the Americans had established a beachhead. A regiment was sent from Rabaul on transports escorted by two heavy cruisers, two light cruisers and six destroyers. They were spotted and the transports turned back.

The Japanese admiral still hoped his force could repeat the success of Savo Island over a year earlier.

He did not. An American force of 4 light cruisers and 8 destroyers savaged the Japanese force in a fierce night action November 2nd. A U.S. destroyer was damaged. The Japanese lost a light cruiser and a destroyer with two cruisers and two destroyers heavily damaged.

“A PEARL HARBOR IN REVERSE”



Halsey was more concerned with the Japanese air power at Rabaul, too close to ignore. He wanted sustained raids. MacArthur agreed.

But he also wanted carrier raids. He was reluctant to use Saratoga as the Japanese would expect it but Nimitz had not said that any of the new carriers would be available.

On November 4th – and expecting to lose at least one of them – Halsey ordered Saratoga and Independence to strike.

The Air Forces from New Guinea and Guadalcanal would also attack.

The raid damaged several ships and forced the Japanese to send their warships to Truk and Kavieng. Halsey’s carriers were never attacked.

“A PEARL HARBOR IN REVERSE”

Nimitz answer was a raid by USS Essex, Bunker Hill and the light carrier Independence on November 11th. The raid sank a destroyer, crippled two cruisers still under repairs from the earlier raid and three other destroyers.

Rabaul was out of the war as a naval port.

“ISLAND HOPPING”

Fighting did occur, but it would not be until March 1944 before the Japanese made a major effort (it failed spectacularly).

The heat, mud, and thick jungle made even moving difficult and seeing an enemy all but impossible.

“ISLAND HOPPING”

Bougainville saw the first significant employment of K-9 units. Where an enemy could be three feet away and remain unseen, the dogs provided an extremely effective enemy detection capability.

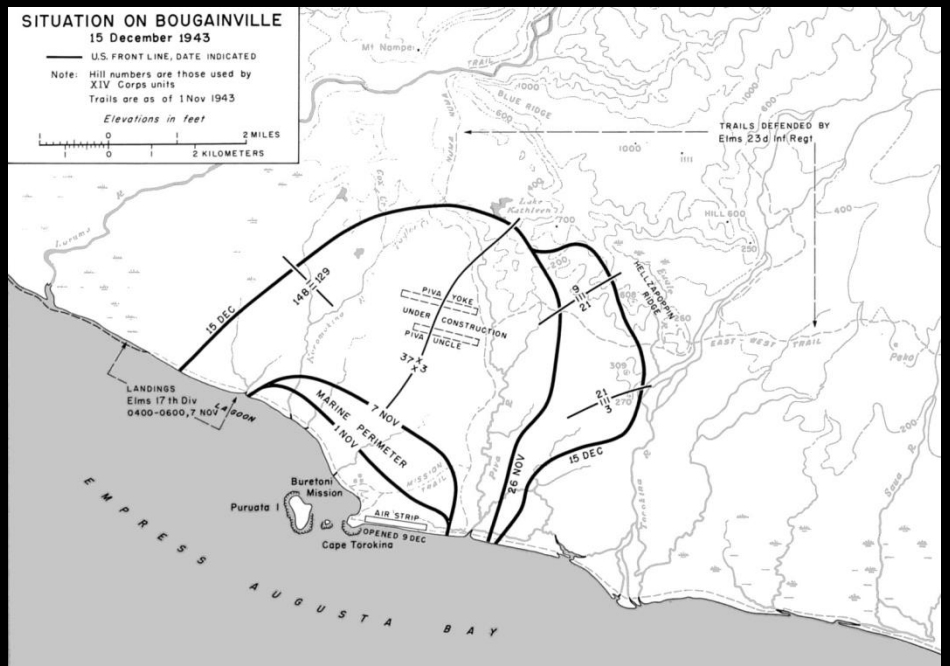
It was also impossible to sneak up on a unit with a dog.

“ISLAND HOPPING”

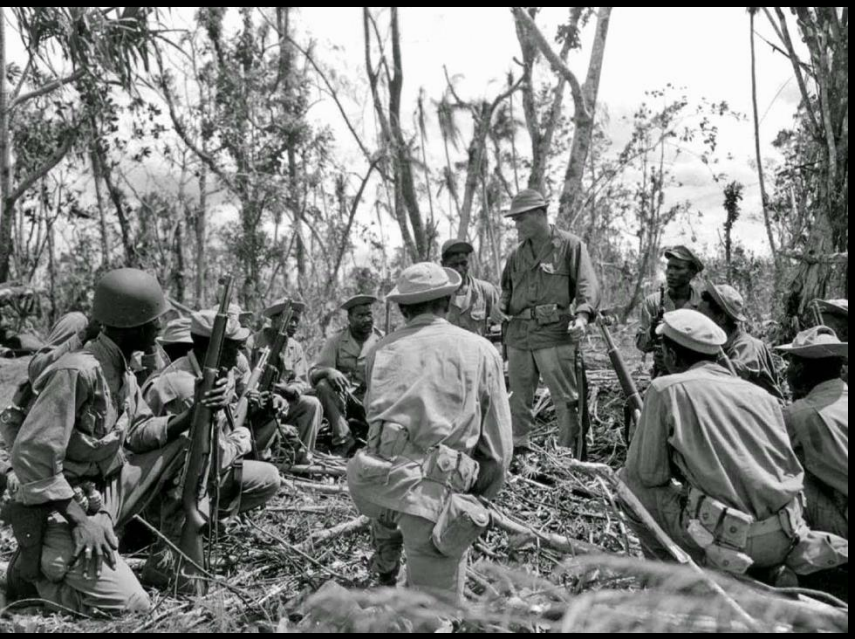
By mid November, the Marines had been joined by the 37th Infantry Division (including the 129th Regiment from Illinois), and a regiment of Australians.

They had the first of three major air bases up and running by December 9th.

By the time the Japanese could attack, two more divisions were waiting for them.



“ISLAND HOPPING”



The heaviest attacks came in March 1944 and where thrown back. After that, the U.S. forces pushed south against the Japanese in limited operations for the rest of the war.

Bougainville became a Jungle Warfare School – units passed through on their way to the real fighting. (By mid- 1944 the Japanese garrison was so depleted in supply it was little more than a target.)

The 37th was there the longest – a year.

Among the units that passed through was the 93rd Infantry Division. This was one of two segregated divisions in the Army and enjoyed a better reputation than the other serving in Italy.

Then again, its officers did not have to justify their incompetence.

“ISLAND HOPPING”

The Japanese garrison would hold out until the end of the war but was not a threat after it destroyed itself trying to counter-attack in March 1944.

The Japanese never learned an appreciation for American artillery or defensive positions. They never changed their tactics no matter how many times it failed.

They suffered around 20,000 KIA out of a garrison of around 65,000.

The total American losses were 727 KIA, around 3,000 WIA. The Australians lost another 516.

Marine fighters from Bougainville would end Rabaul as a threat beginning in December, 1943.