



# War in the Pacific

Defending Australia

Campaigns in New Guinea and the Solomons 1943

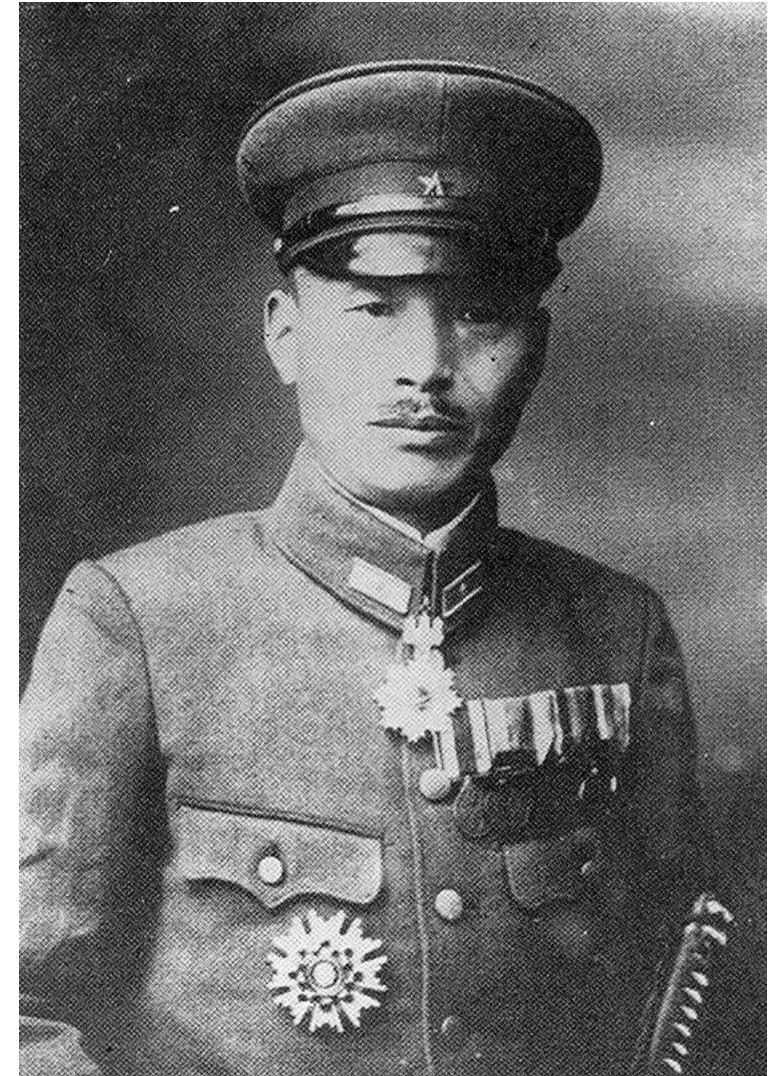
What we Now Know 6.

# Plan

- Continuing the process of going back to look at some of the things, which were not known at the time, which hopefully should help us understand why things happened as they did.
- I will also spend some time following some of the actors in the story, to see whence they came and where they went.
- Last time we looked at the Land Battle in Malaya.
- This week I want to look at the Land Battle on the Kokoda trail at Guadalcanal & at Milne Bay.

# Lae & Salamaua

- The invasion of Lae and Salamaua had been carried out by a combined navy-army group totalling about 3,000 men.
- These gathered in Rabaul, left there with a strong naval escort and, as they approached their destination on 7th March, divided into two groups.
- A strong battalion group of Major-General Tomitaro Horii's (photo) South Seas Force landed at Salamaua. Naval troops occupied Lae.
- As soon as it was clear that the land defence of the two points was secure Horii's men withdrew from Salamaua leaving about 1,500 naval troops in the whole Lae-Salamaua area to build up and defend the Lae air base which was their chief concern.



# Kokoda

- On **14th June** General Hyakutake, commander of the XVII Army, whose headquarters were then at Davao, had been ordered to prepare an overland attack on Port Moresby. He was not to launch this, however, until he was satisfied that the track from the Buna-Gona coast via Kokoda was passable for a sufficient force.
- If the attack were finally judged feasible it was to be carried out by Major-General Horii's South Seas Force. When his preparations for this new venture were well advanced, however, Horii learned that the deployment of his men was to be part of a larger movement than he had expected.
- On **18th July** Hyakutake issued orders for the employment against New Guinea of almost the whole force available to him. Colonel Kiyomi Yazawa's 41st Infantry Regiment Group (Yazawa Force), veterans of Malaya and the Philippines, would come down from the Philippines to support Horii's advance over the Papuan mountains.
- Major General Kiyotake Kawaguchi's 124th Infantry Regiment Group (Kawaguchi Force), which had served in Borneo and the Philippines, would come down from Palau and cooperate with the navy in an attack on Milne Bay.
- The 28th Infantry Regiment, under the command of Colonel Kiyonao Ichiki, was on board transport ships near Guam.



LT GEN HYAKUTAKE, from his HQ at Rabaul, commanded Japanese forces in New Guinea and Guadalcanal

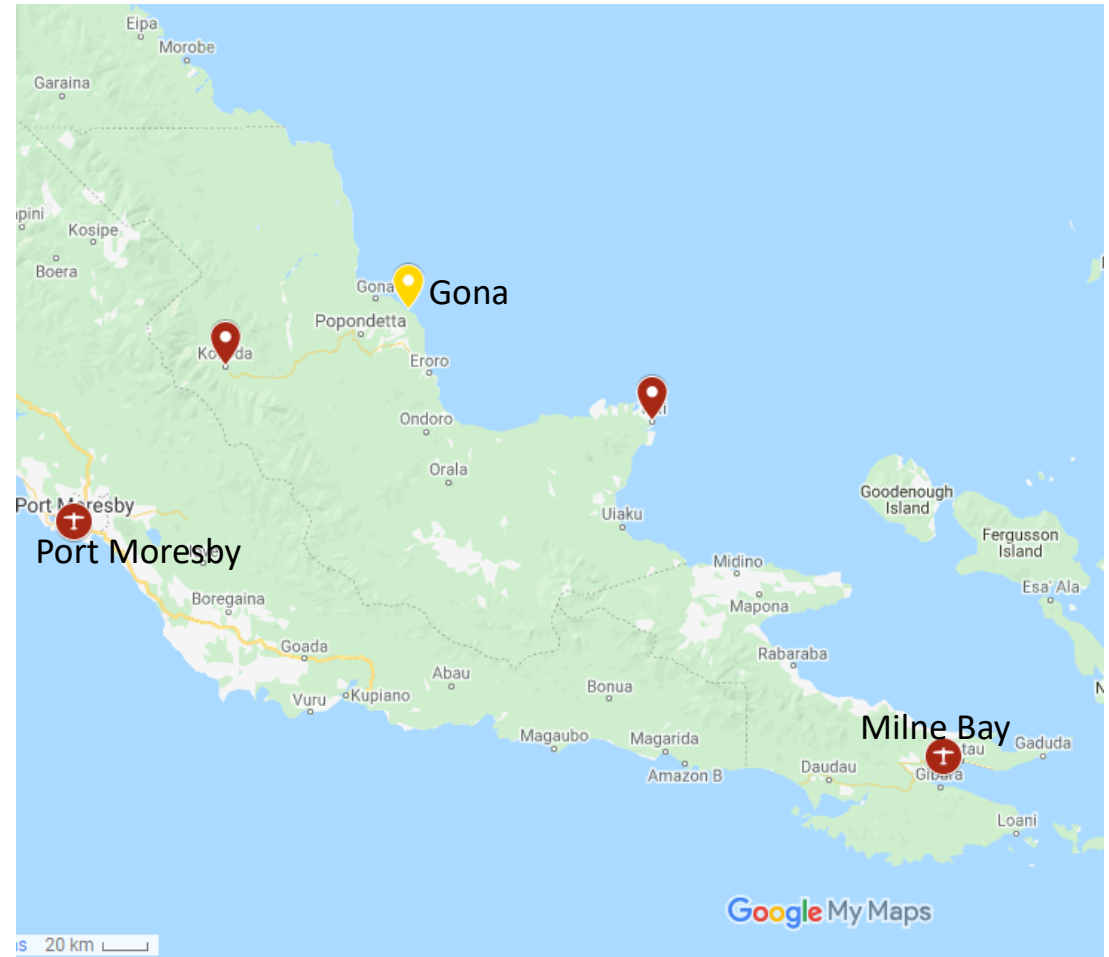
# Kokoda

- The task of making the initial examination of the Kokoda Track was allotted to Colonel Yosuke Yokoyama who arrived at Rabaul about 14th July with the 15th Independent Engineer Regiment. His report was to reach Horii early in August and on that report would depend whether or not the main movement was put in train.
- Yokoyama was ordered to land near Basabua (about a mile and a half east of Gona), advance rapidly to the "mountain pass south of Kokoda" and examine the track leading to Port Moresby.
- He was to prepare the coastal section of the track for motor traffic and make the mountain sections passable for pack horses at least.
- Even if he found it was not practicable to advance beyond Kokoda he was to hold the area between the coast and the ranges.
- He landed at Buna on 21 July.



# Kokoda

- Soon after Hyakutake arrived at Rabaul from the Philippines on **24th July** he found that Yokoyama was sending most hopeful reports to Horii.
- On the strength of these Tokyo ordered Hyakutake on the **28th** to put the main plan into effect. Hyakutake then at once completed his planning.
- The Yazawa Force would join Horii and the combined forces would cross the mountains to Port Moresby.
- The Eighth Fleet and the Kawaguchi Force would take Milne Bay and then coordinate a landing at Port Moresby with Horii's debouchment down from the mountains.
- The naval troops at Lae and Salamaua would sally against the local defenders in a diversionary role as the main movement overland and against Milne Bay got under way.



# Kokoda

- In spite of the Allied air watch one transport (loaded mainly with supplies) got in on **25th July**.
- But two other transports, running in on the **29th**, were less fortunate. One, carrying some 263 men (the balance of the 15th Independent Engineers), was sunk though most of the troops managed to get ashore in motor boats. The other was forced by the attacking aircraft to sheer off back to Rabaul still carrying its cargo of vehicles and supplies.
- On **31st July** another convoy was forced back to Rabaul before it reached Gona.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

014871

1943-05-19. NEW GUINEA. GONA. THIS WRECKED JAPANESE SHIP "AYATOSAN MARU", SUNK BY ALLIED AIRCRAFT DURING THE BATTLE OF GONA. IT IS NOW USED FOR TARGET PRACTICE BY ALLIED FORCES AT GONA BEACH.

Ship was actually sunk by allied aircraft on 21 July. She had previously been damaged during the Malaya invasion by both RAAF Hudsons and the Dutch submarine O – 16.

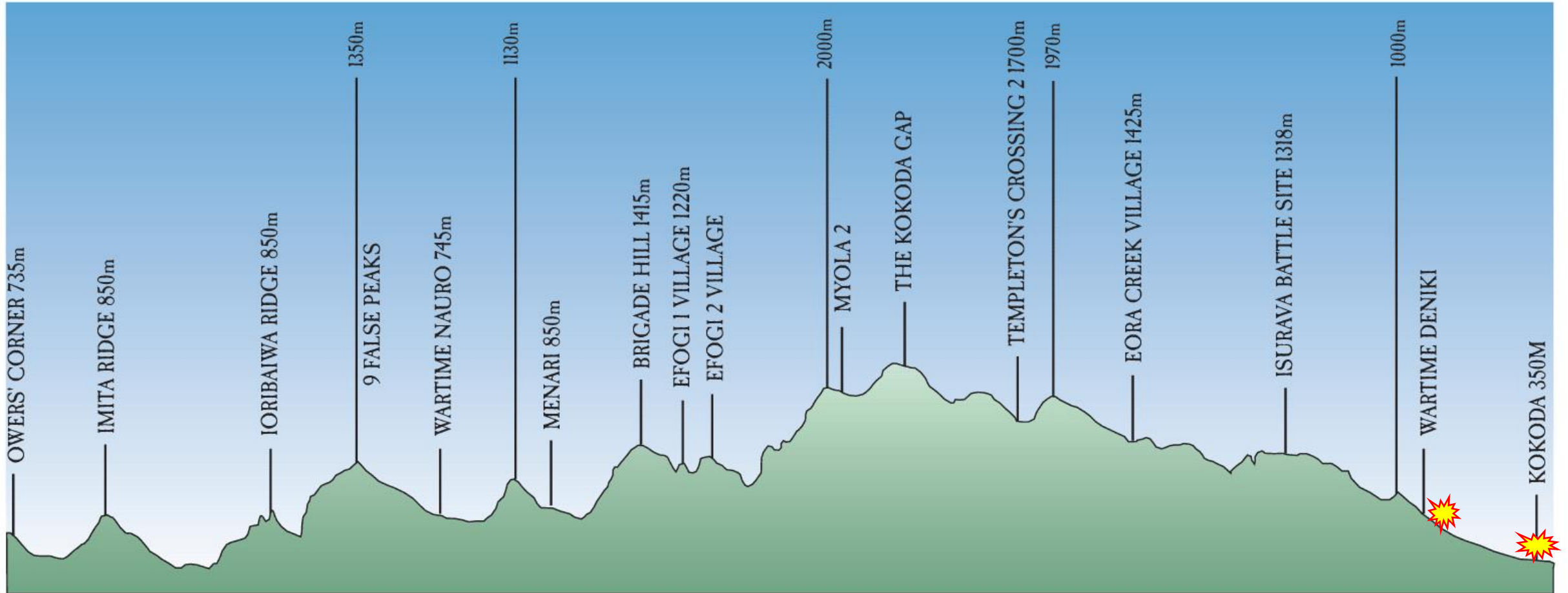
# 7 August - Guadalcanal

- The 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division landed on Tulagi and Guadalcanal.
- The landing on Guadalcanal was unopposed. Apparently there had only been construction troops on the island.
- The landing on Tulagi was violently opposed.
- The opposition was overcome in three days. Of the estimated 800 Japanese defenders 70 escaped to Florida Island, 23 were captured and the rest were killed.





# 9 August – Kokoda



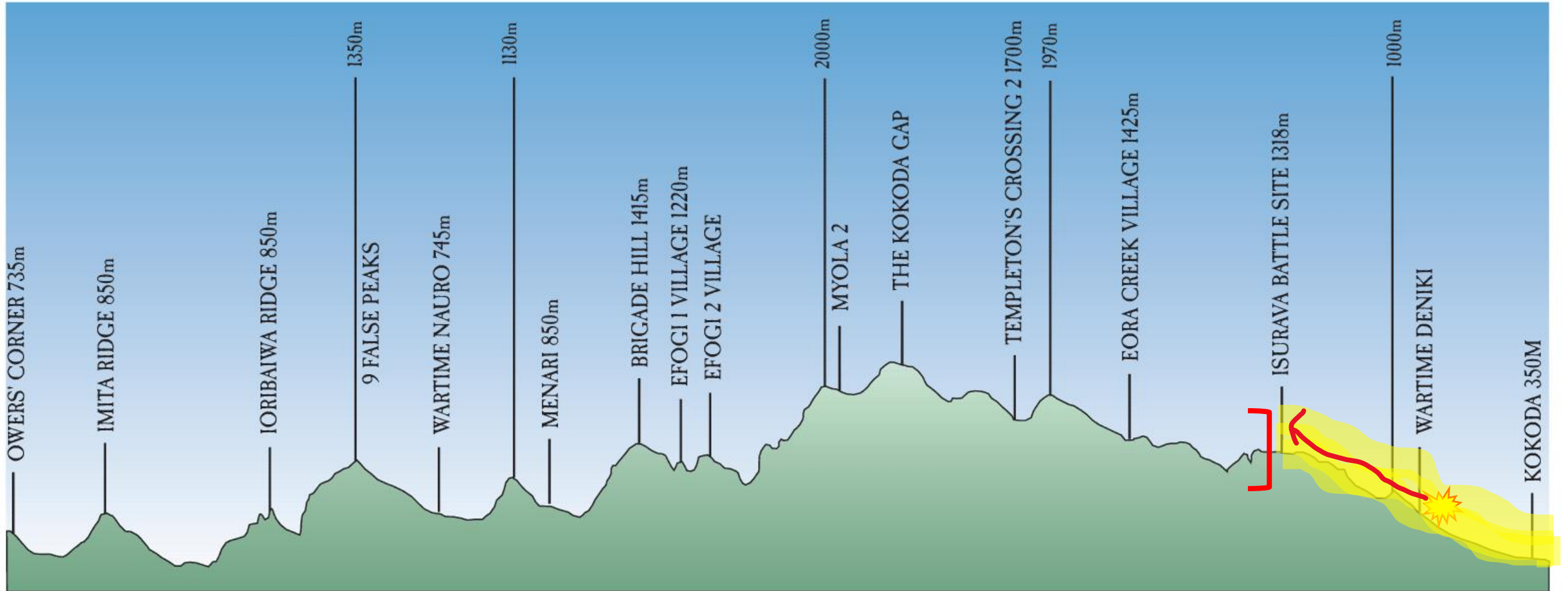
OWEN STANLEY RANGE - KOKODA TRACK

# Imperial Headquarters

- On **August the 10<sup>th</sup>**, in the usual Japanese fashion, Admiral Nagano (photo) and general Sugiyama issued a Central Agreement for future operations in the New Guinea and Solomons Theatre.
- Imperial Headquarters still deemed Port Moresby to be the centerpiece of Japanese designs in the Theatre. The new Central Agreement however amended the mission of Lieutenant General Hyakutake's 17th army.
- Originally Hyakutake was to leapfrog the 18th army and take Port Moresby.
- Under his new orders Hyakutake would immediately retake Guadalcanal and Tulagi with forces made available to the 17th army.



# 14 August – Kokoda



OWEN STANLEY RANGE - KOKODA TRACK

# Kokoda

- On 13th and 14th August Mikawa's construction men got through. Bad weather and Japanese fighters held the Allied airmen off so successfully that some 3,000 Japanese, Koreans and Formosans of the 14th and 15th Naval Construction Units, together with their equipment and supplies, got ashore at Buna without any loss of shipping.
- Horii got the main body of his South Seas Force away from Rabaul on 17th August.
- On 21st August two battalions of the 41st Regiment landed at Buna with strong supporting arms (including a regimental gun unit, a mountain battery, a quick-firing gun detachment), about 100 of the 5th Sasebo, 175 Rabaul boys, and 230 horses.
- About 13,500 troops had been landed in Papua of whom some 10,000 formed a well-balanced fighting group.

# Guadalcanal

- The 17th Army, heavily involved in the campaign in New Guinea, had only a few units available to counter the invasion of Guadalcanal. The 35th Infantry Brigade under Major General Kawaguchi was at Palau, the 4th (Aoba) Infantry Regiment was in the Philippines and the 28<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, under the command of Colonel Kiyonao Ichiki, was on board transport ships near Guam.
- The units began to move towards Guadalcanal immediately. Ichiki's regiment, being the closest, arrived first.
- A "First Element" of Ichiki's unit, consisting of about 917 soldiers, landed from destroyers at Taivu Point, east of the Marine perimeter, after midnight on 19 August, then made a 9-mile (14 km) night march west toward the perimeter.
- An American patrol and a Solomon islander coastwatcher, Sergeant Major Vouza, gave some warning of the attack.
- Ichiki's unit conducted a night time frontal assault across Alligator Creek onto the Marine's prepared positions on the east edge of the Lunga perimeter in the early morning hours of 21 August.
- When the attack across the river was repelled Ichiki attempted to outflank the defence through the surf but ran into more prepared defensive positions on the beach and was again repelled.
- After daybreak, the Marine units counterattacked Ichiki's surviving troops with infantry and tanks, killing many more of them. The dead included Ichiki.
- In total, 789 of the 917 members of the Ichiki Regiment's First Element were killed in the battle. The majority were killed by machine gun fire while charging prepared positions.



Dead Japanese soldiers on the sandbar at the mouth of Alligator Creek, Guadalcanal after the Battle of the Tenaru

# 21 August - Guadalcanal

- When the tanks returned to the west bank, Vandegrift wrote, “the rear of the tanks looked like meat grinders.”
- The action cost the Marines 34 dead and 75 wounded.
- A search of the battlefield gleaned the division ten heavy and 20 light machine guns, 20 grenade throwers, 700 rifles, 20 pistols, numerous swords and grenades and three 70mm guns.
- A number of Japanese chose to use their last breath to take an American with them. One Japanese sergeant startled Lt Cols Twining, Pollock and Cresswell by discharging an automatic pistol in their faces-without effect-and then blowing off the top of his own head.
- Vandegrift wrote to Holcomb, the Commandant of the Corps, a few days later:
  - “General, I have never heard or read of this kind of fighting. These people refuse to surrender. The wounded wait until men come up to examine them . . . and blow themselves and the other fellow to pieces with a hand grenade.
- Vandegrift awarded Sergeant Major Vouza the silver star and conferred a rarer honour by appointing him a Sergeant Major in the United States Marine Corps.



Vouza on Guadalcanal in August 1942

# 24 August - Sea

- The two carrier forces clashed in a naval battle off the Eastern Solomons.
- The Americans sighted but, due to failures in communications, failed to attack the Japanese big carriers but did score hits on a light carrier.
- The Japanese found and seriously damaged Enterprise.
- Fighter Direction was again ineffective but the AA guns claimed many Japanese aircraft.
- Both fleets then retreated from the area. The Japanese lost Ryūjō and dozens of aircraft and most of their aircrew; the Americans lost a handful of planes and Enterprise was under repair for two months.



U.S. carriers *Wasp* (foreground), *Saratoga*, and *Enterprise* (background) operating in the Pacific south of Guadalcanal in August 1942.

# Guadalcanal

- Three slow transport ships departed from Truk on 16 August, carrying the remaining 1,400 soldiers from Ichiki's (28th) Infantry Regiment plus 500 naval marines from the 5th Yokosuka Special Naval Landing Force.
- The transports were escorted by 13 warships commanded by Admiral Raizō Tanaka (photo), who planned to land the troops on Guadalcanal on 24 August.
- On **25 August**, Tanaka's convoy was attacked by CAF aircraft from Henderson Field. After suffering heavy damage during the battle, including the sinking of one of the transports, the convoy was forced to divert to the Shortland Islands in the northern Solomons in order to transfer the surviving troops to destroyers for later delivery to Guadalcanal.





# Guadalcanal

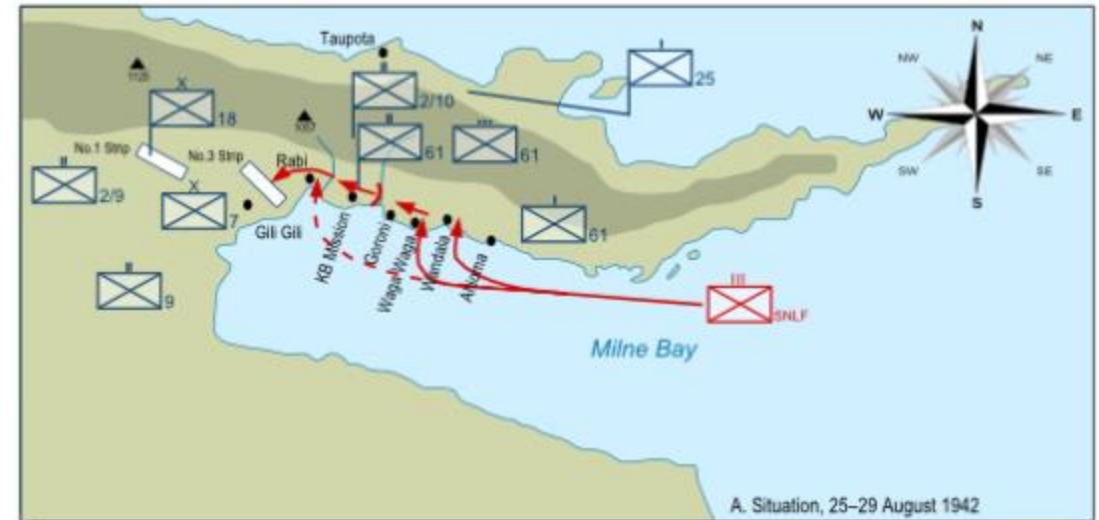
- By 23 August, Kawaguchi's 35th Infantry Brigade reached Truk and was loaded onto slow transport ships for the rest of the trip to Guadalcanal.
- The damage done to Tanaka's convoy during the Battle of the Eastern Solomons caused the Japanese to reconsider trying to deliver more troops to Guadalcanal by slow transport. Instead, the ships carrying Kawaguchi's soldiers were sent to Rabaul.
- From there, the Japanese planned to deliver Kawaguchi's men to Guadalcanal by destroyers staging through a Japanese naval base in the Shortland Islands.
- The Japanese destroyers were usually able to make round trips down "The Slot" to Guadalcanal and back in a single night throughout the campaign, minimizing their exposure to Allied air attack. The runs became known as the "Tokyo Express" to Allies.



General Kiyotake Kawaguchi (1892-1961)

# Milne Bay

- The Japanese landed a total of 1,900 to 2,000 troops, thinking that 20 or 30 aircraft were based at Milne Bay and that the ground forces numbered two or three companies deployed for the defence of the airfield.
- They had planned to use both soldiers and marines. After the Kawaguchi units were diverted to Guadalcanal they intended to use Aoba Force. But they could not get Aoba Force down from the Philippines in time and so determined to rely on naval forces only.
- When Milne Bay had been occupied they proposed to capture Port Moresby "with one blow", in a combined land, sea and air attack.
- Their convoy left Rabaul on 24th August and, on the morning of the 26th, landed Commander Hayashi's 5th Kure Naval Landing Force, about 600 strong, 10th Naval Labour Corps numbering some 360, and possibly about 200 of Commander Tsukioka's 5th Sasebo Naval Landing Force.



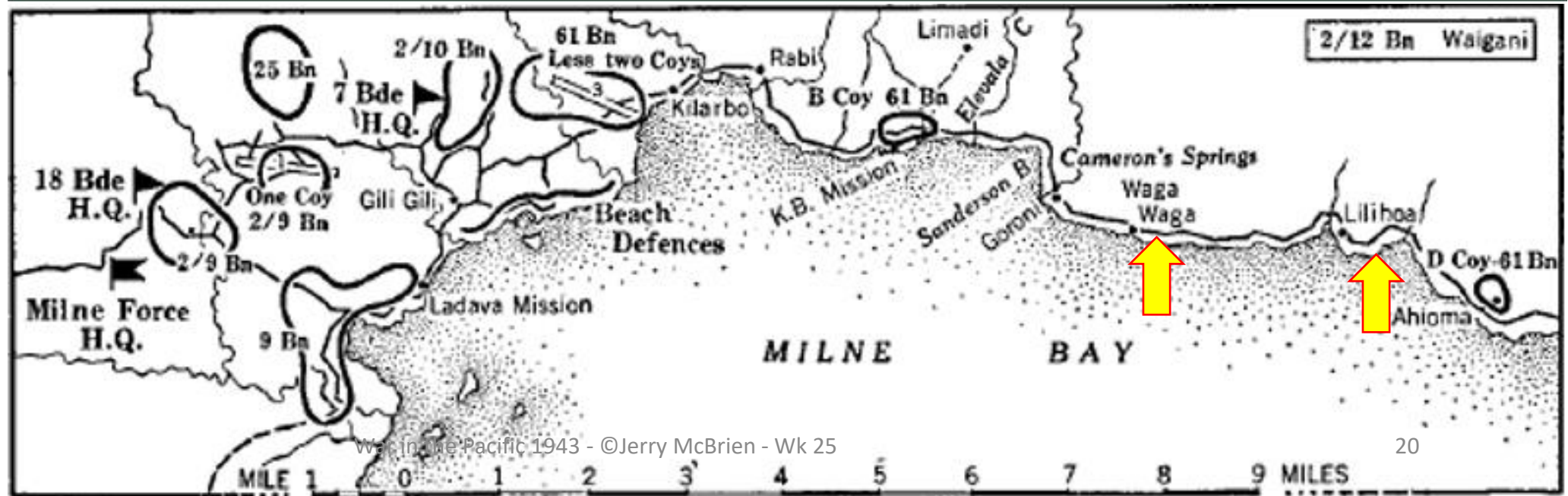
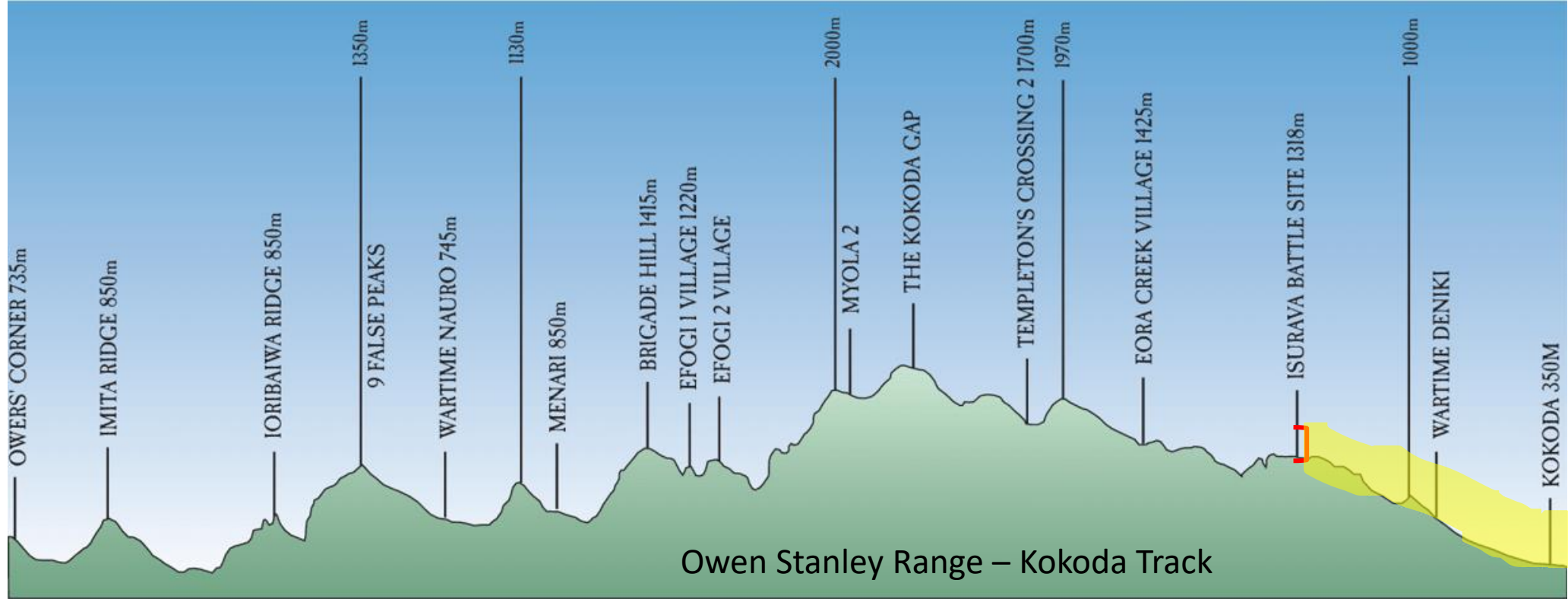
# Milne Bay

- The balance of the 5th Sasebo, approximately 350 strong, had embarked at Buna and were to disembark at Taupota and cooperate with the main landings by moving across the mountains to Milne Bay, but became marooned at Goodenough Island through the destruction of their barges by Allied air attacks on **25th August**.
- The main invasion forces landed at the wrong place. They had intended to land closer to the airfield.
- The R.A.A.F. attacks on the **26th** caused disorder and casualties. Their own lack of air support hindered them. They knew little or nothing of the country over which they had to advance and had no satisfactory maps. The relentless rains hampered their movements and weakened many of their men

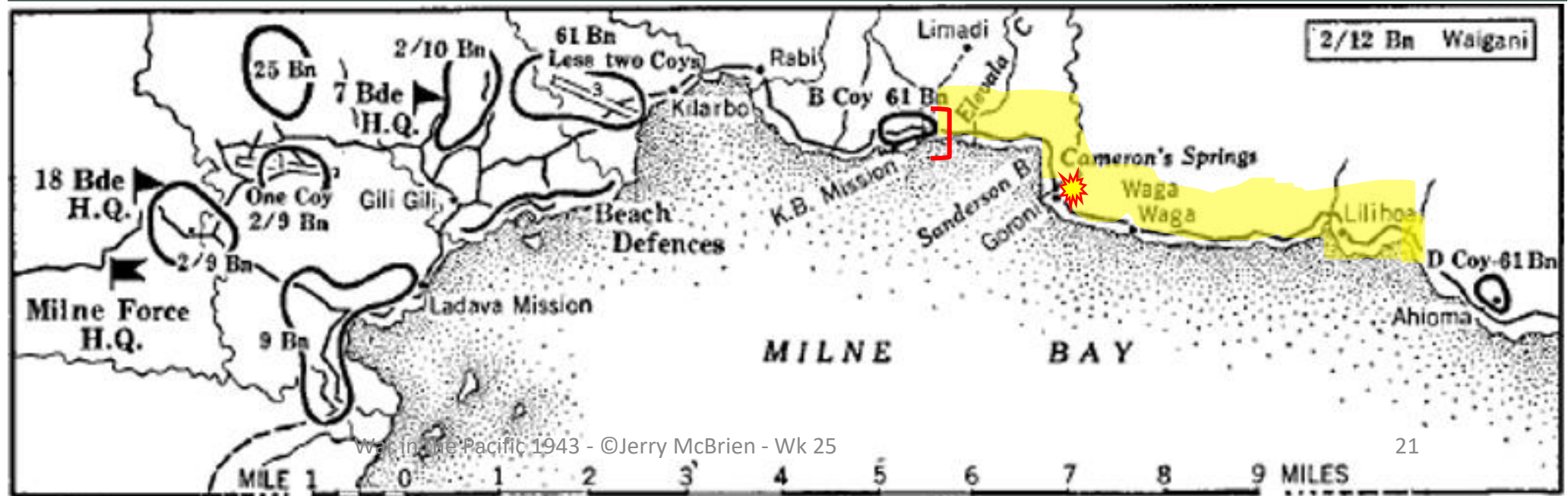
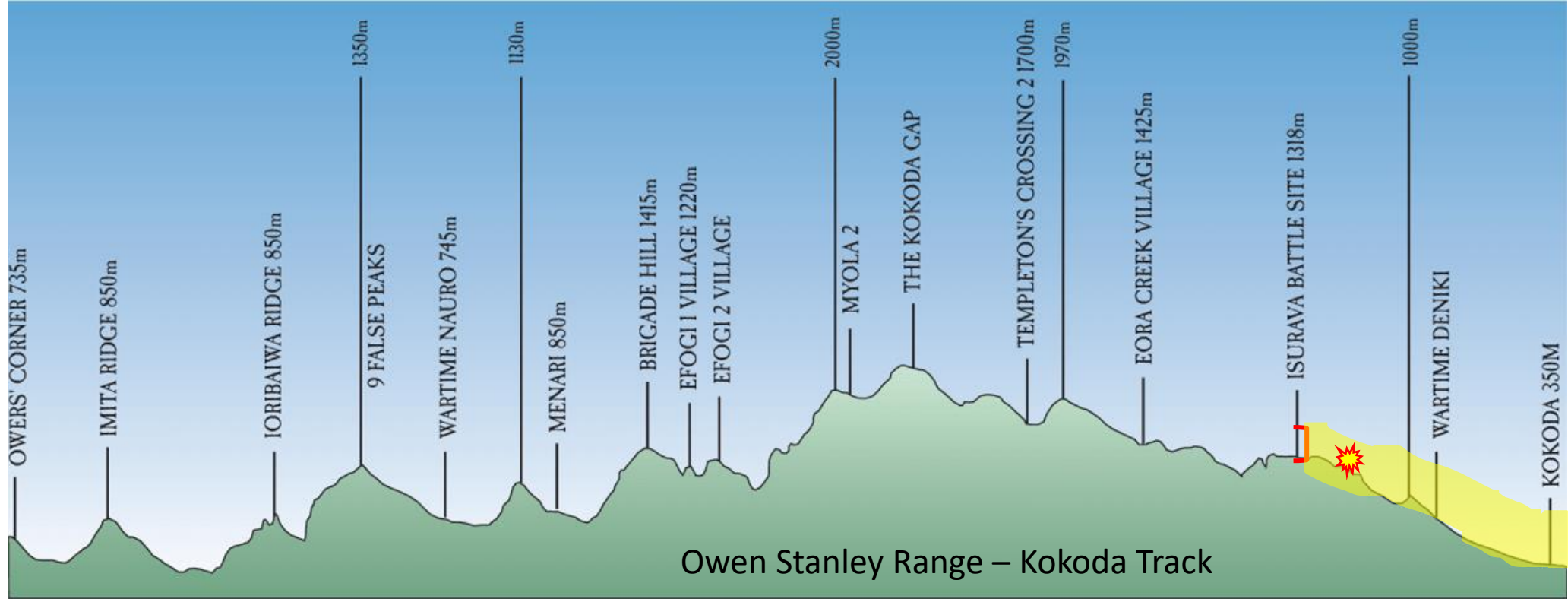


Squadron Leader Keith "Bluey" Truscott, Commanding Officer of No. 76 Squadron RAAF, taxiing along Marston Matting at Milne Bay in September 1942

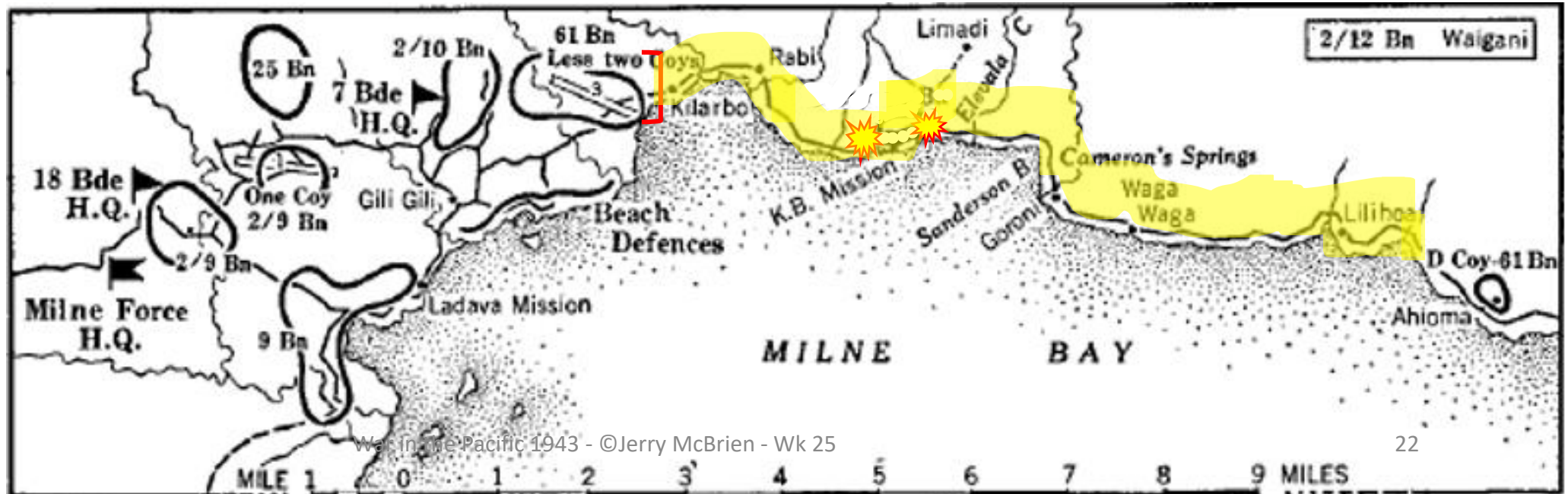
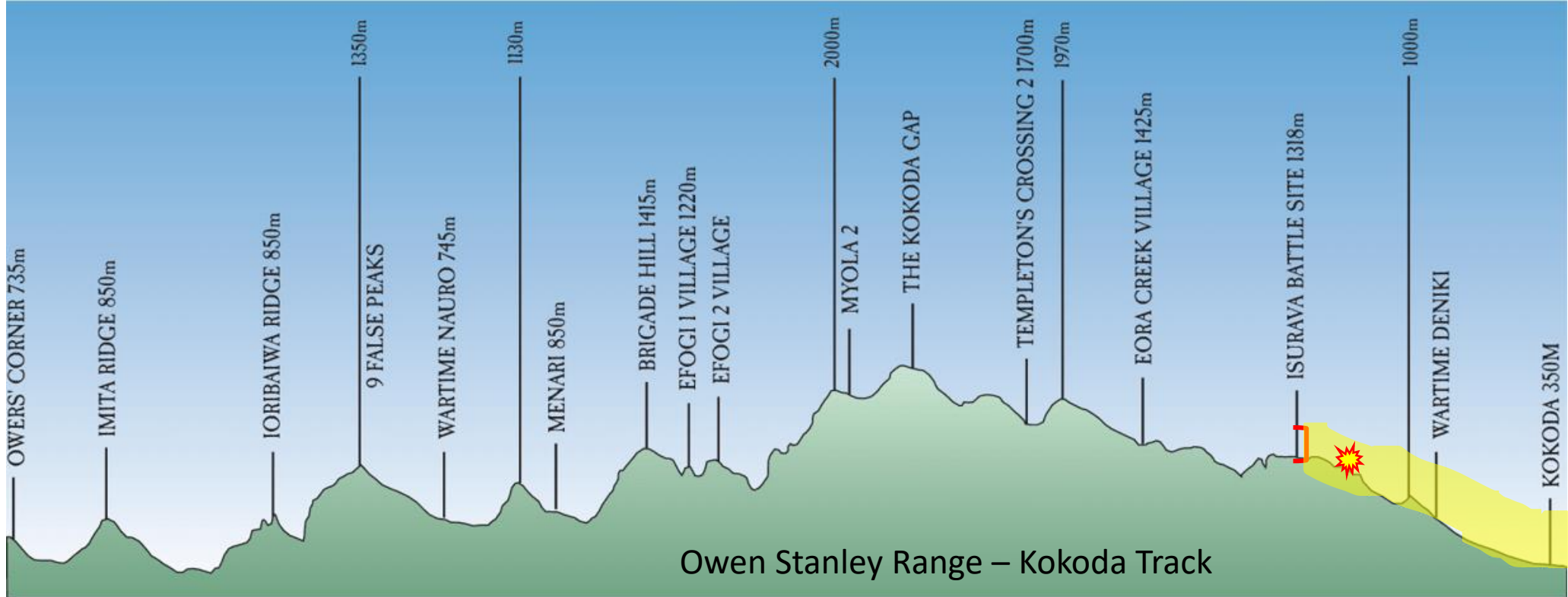
25 August



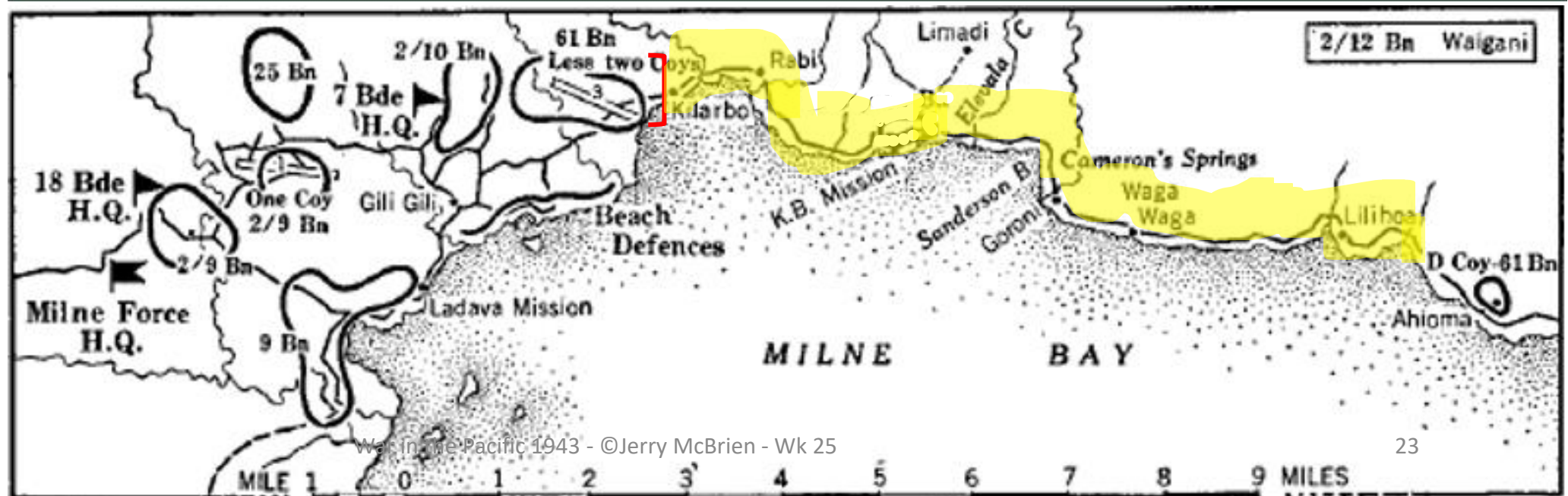
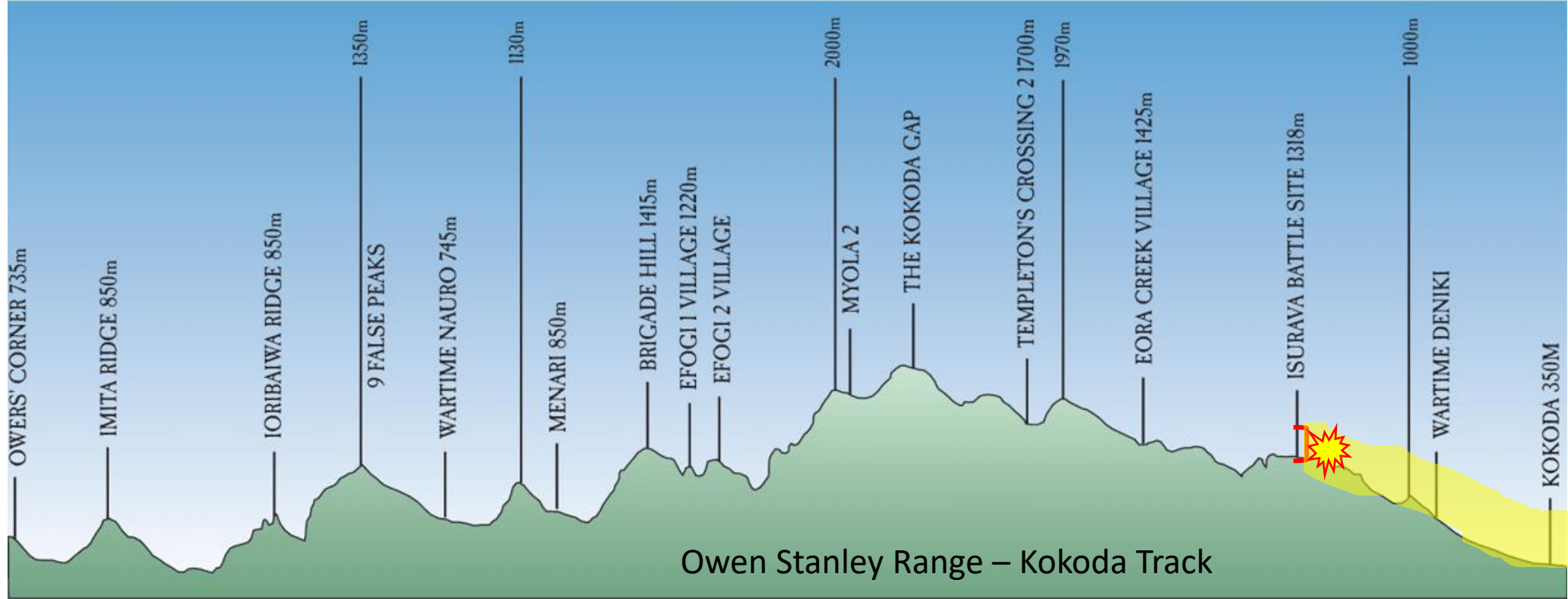
26 August



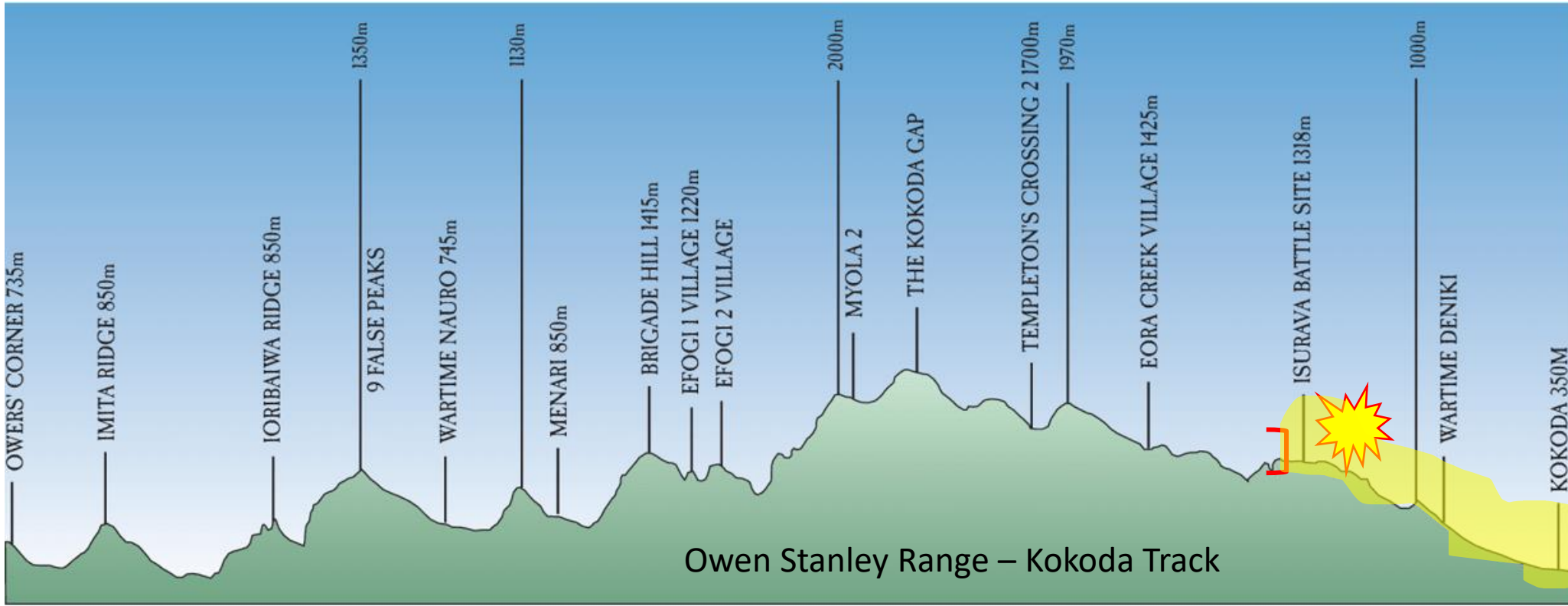
27 August



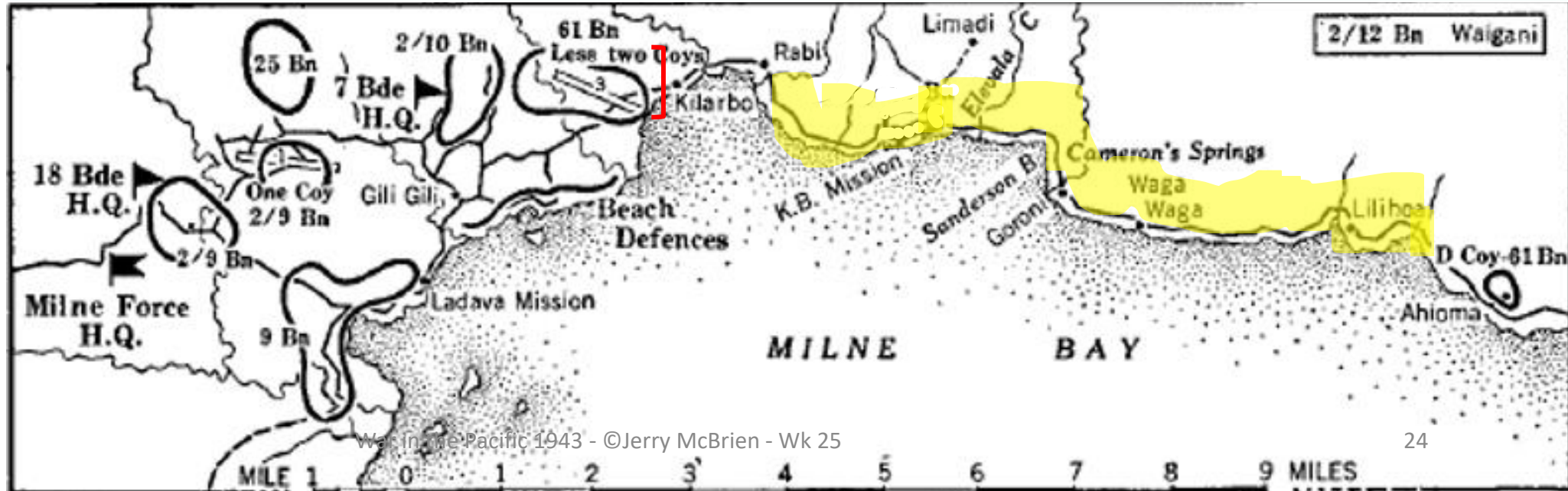
28 August



29 August



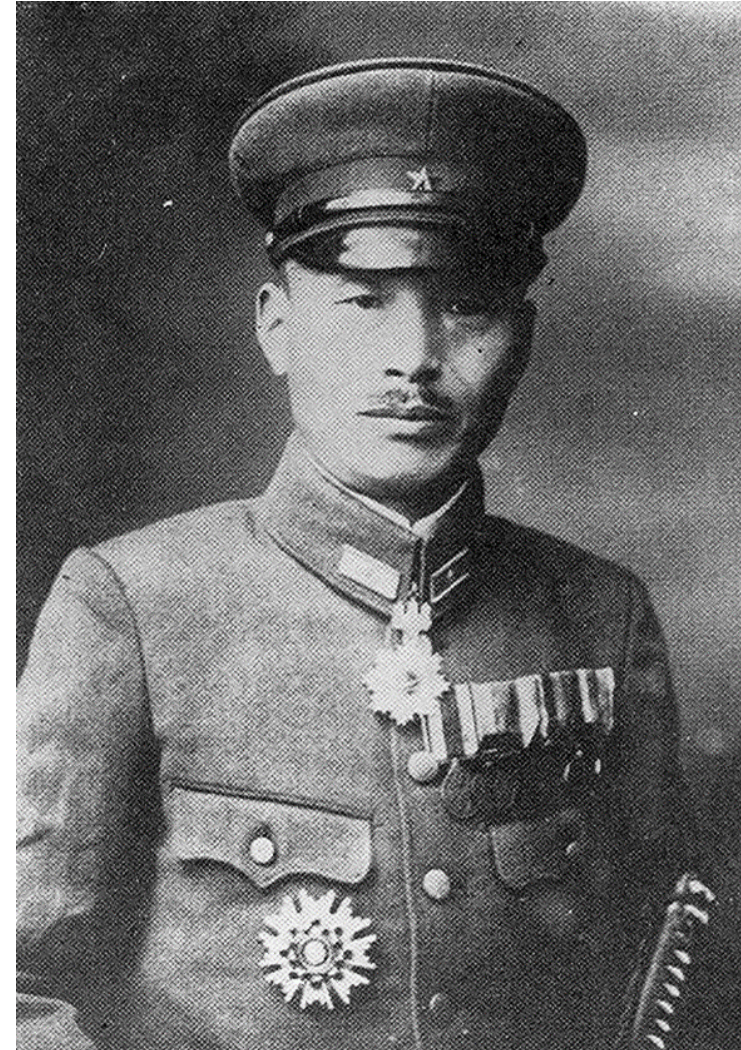
Owen Stanley Range – Kokoda Track



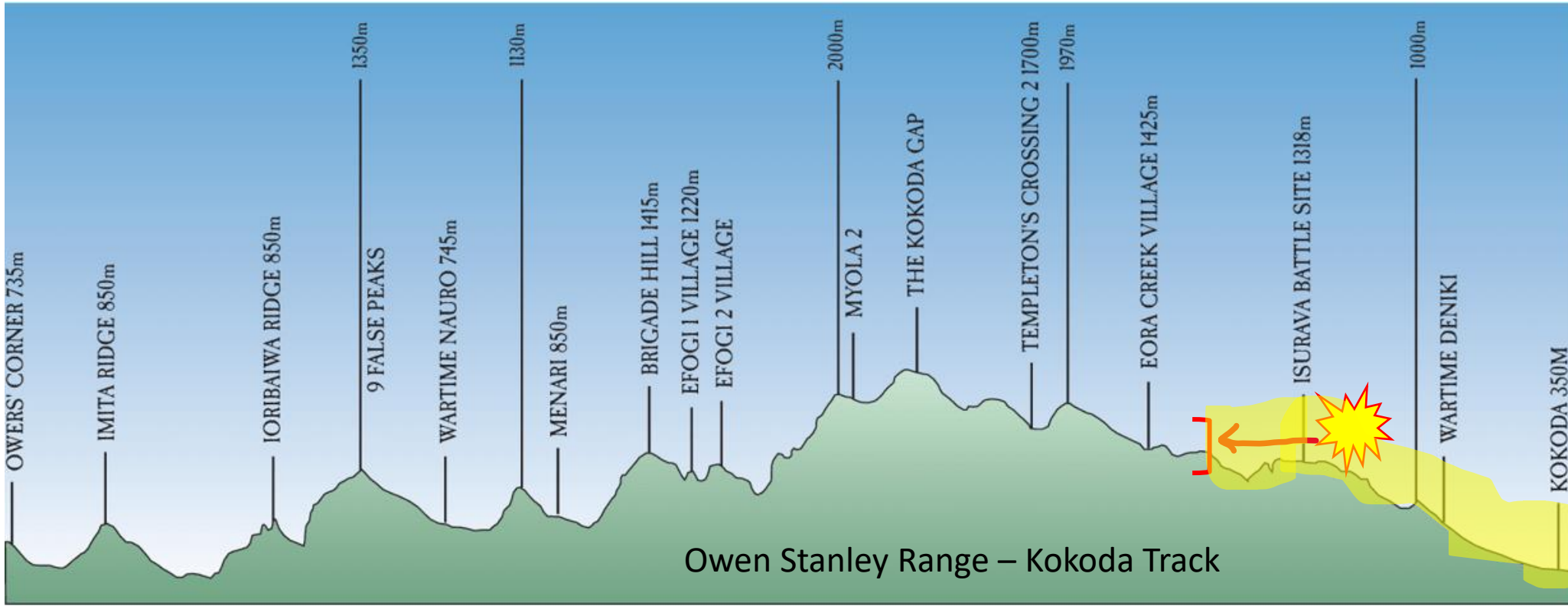


# Kokoda

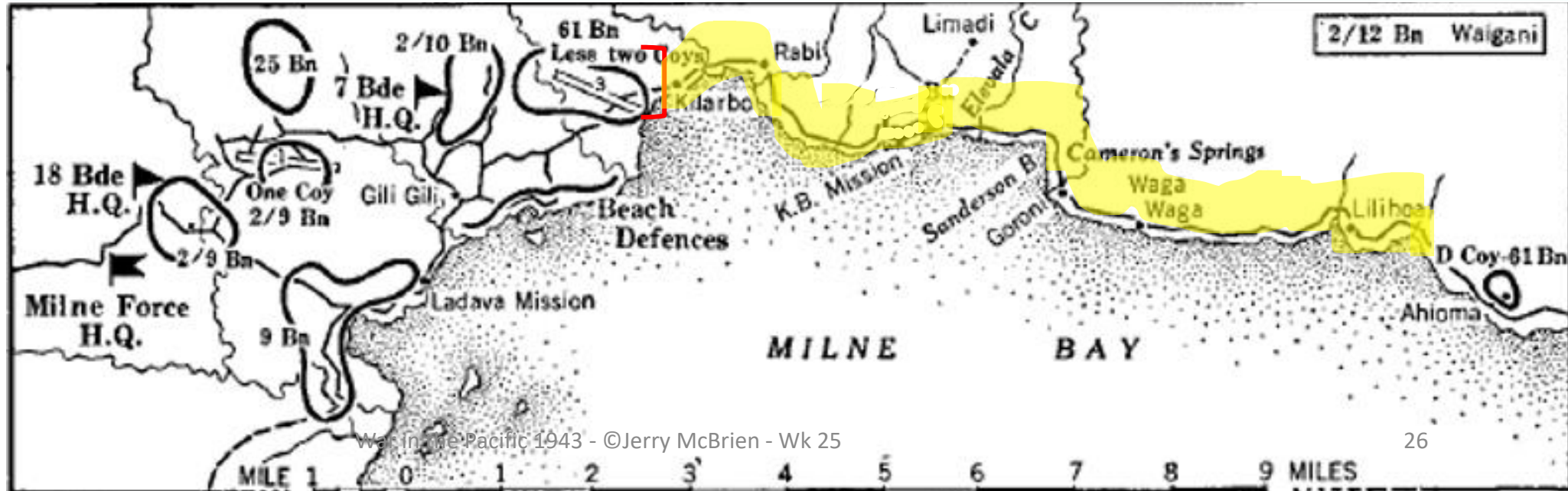
- When he opened his offensive on **26 August**, Horii's objective had been Port Moresby.
- The deterioration of the situation at Milne Bay, and the difficulty of getting troops ashore at Guadalcanal in the face of Allied naval and air forces operating in the Solomons area, caused General Hyakutake on **29 August** to instruct Horii to halt as soon as he had reached the southern foothills of the Owen Stanley Range.
- The advance was not to be resumed until such time as Milne Bay had been taken and the Guadalcanal operation was progressing satisfactorily. Imperial General Headquarters concurred in these orders and two days later (**31 August**) directed that General Horii go on the defensive as soon as he had crossed the Owen Stanley Range.



30 August

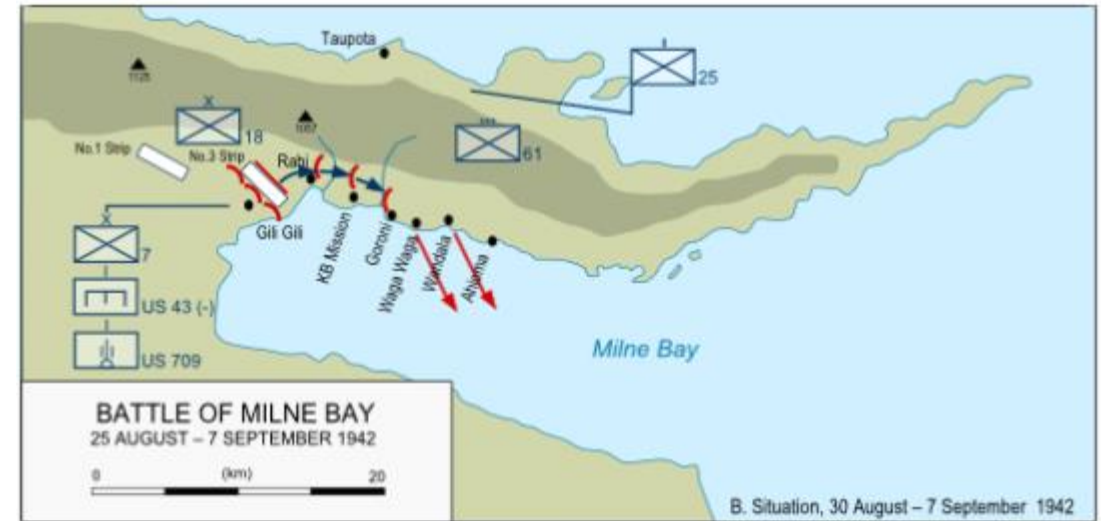


Owen Stanley Range – Kokoda Track

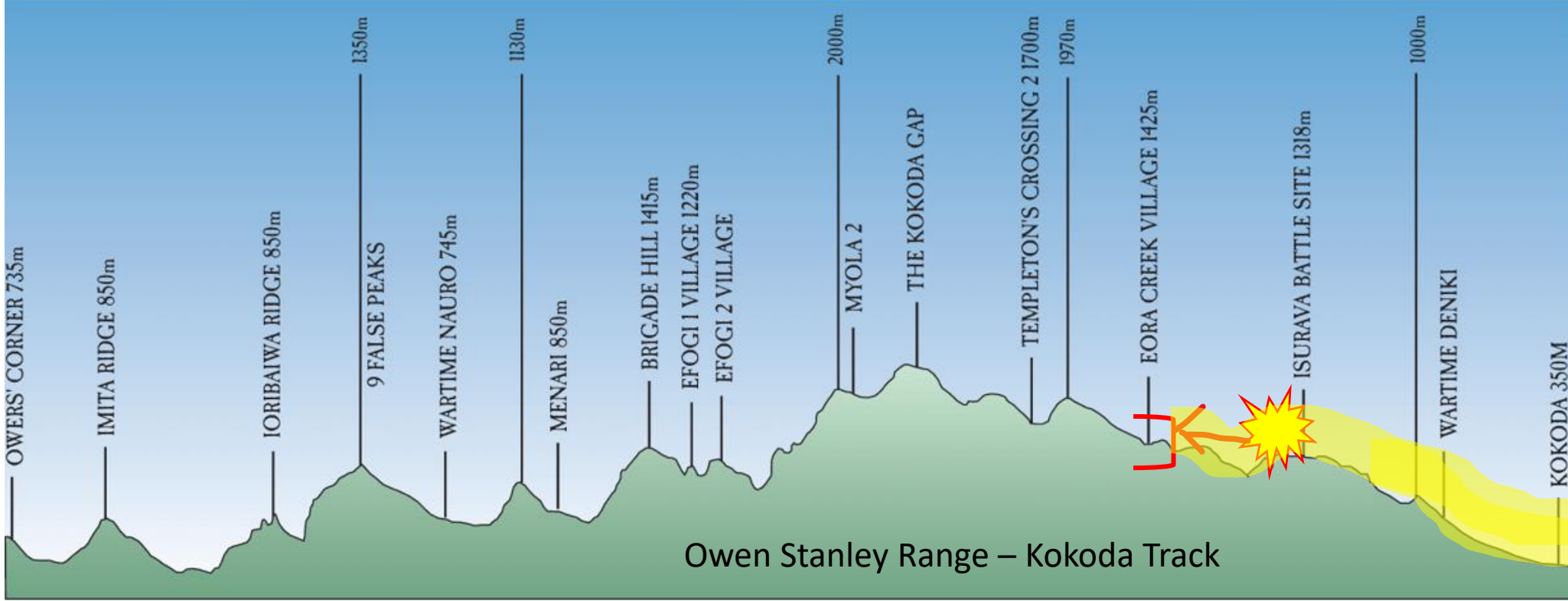


# Milne Bay

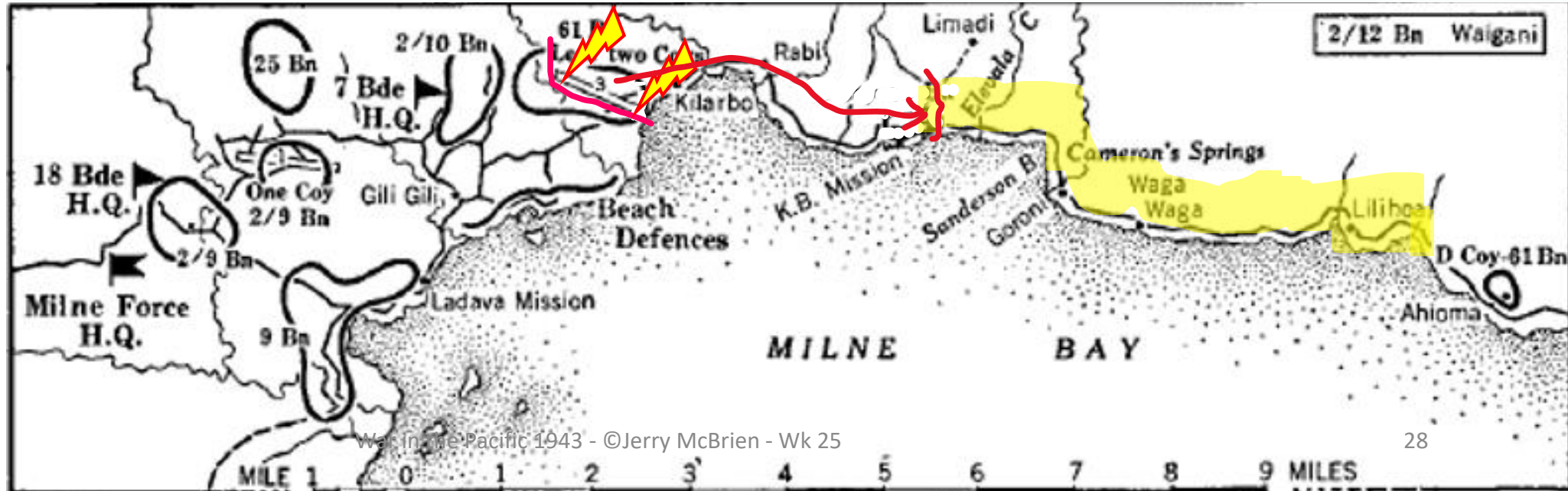
- The increasing resistance they met as they pushed on towards the partly-prepared No. 3 Strip, culminating in their disastrous attacks on the strip itself—in which they lost heavily—wore them down.
- Reinforcements were not available in sufficient numbers to enable them to maintain the impetus of their attack or to restore the position in any measure once it began to slip from their grasp.
- Probably on the night **29th-30th August** the whole of Commander Yano's 3rd Kure Naval Landing Force and about a third of the 5th Yokosuka were landed, which together would have totalled about 770.
- On the night of the **6<sup>th</sup>/7th September** the cruiser Tenryu and two corvettes were in Milne Bay and lifted some 600 wounded and unwounded survivors.
- Commander Hayashi and most of his staff were killed, as well as most of his 5th Kure, which headed the original landing. Most of the 5th Yokosuka were killed. Yano was wounded and taken off by sea and his company of the 3rd Kure suffered rather less than the other units.



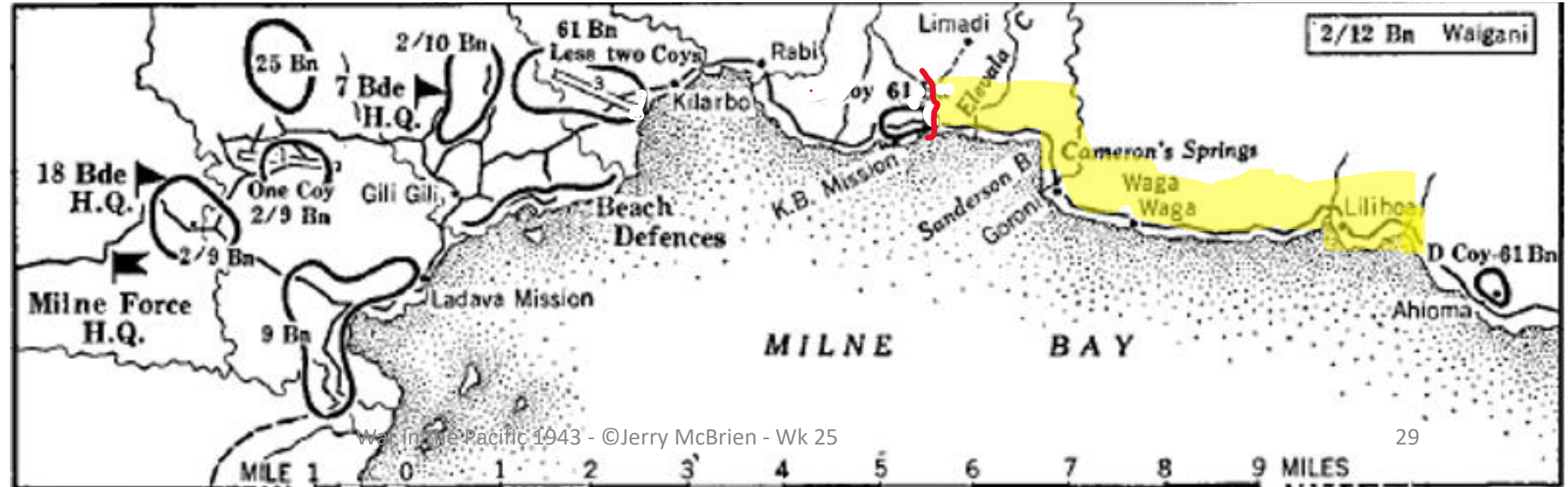
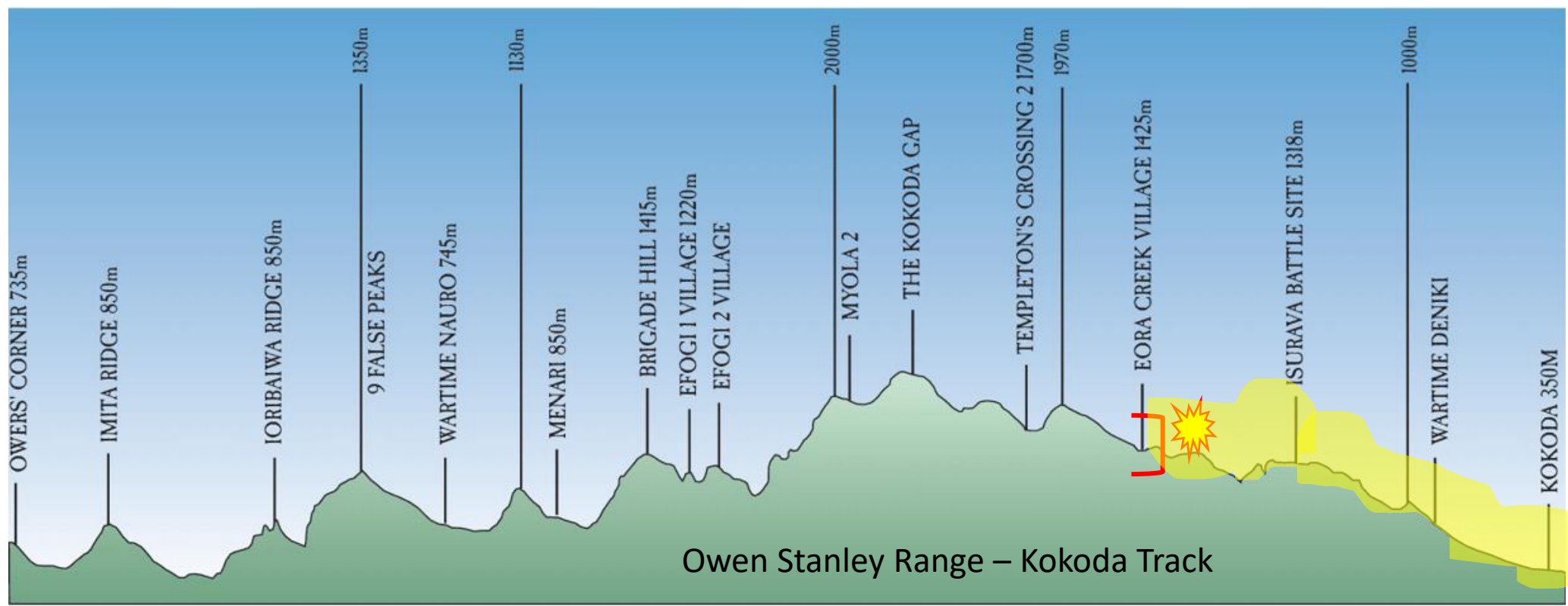
31 August



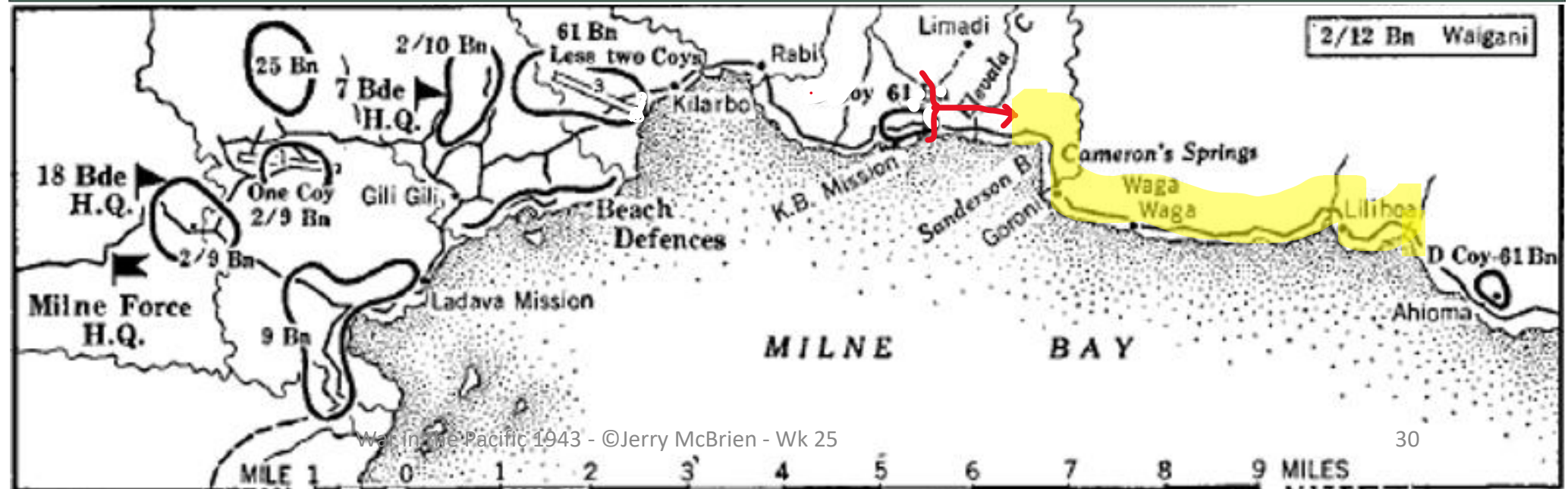
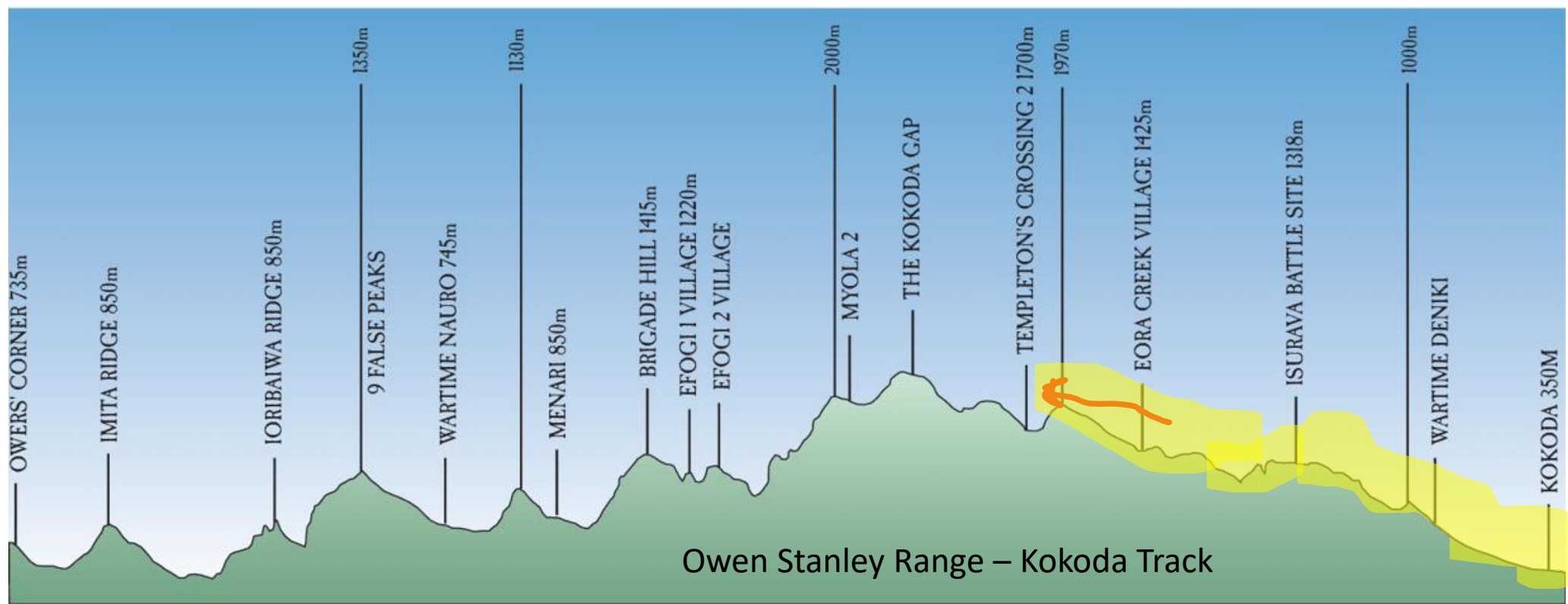
Owen Stanley Range – Kokoda Track



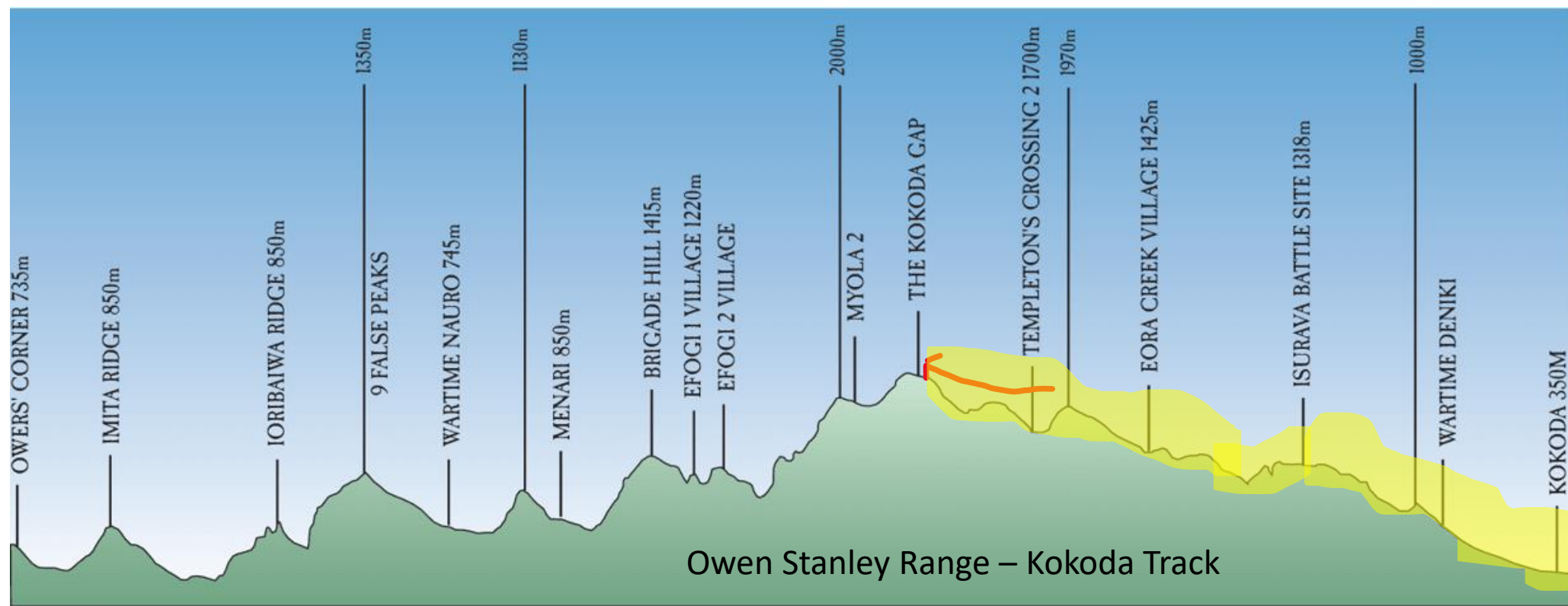
1 September



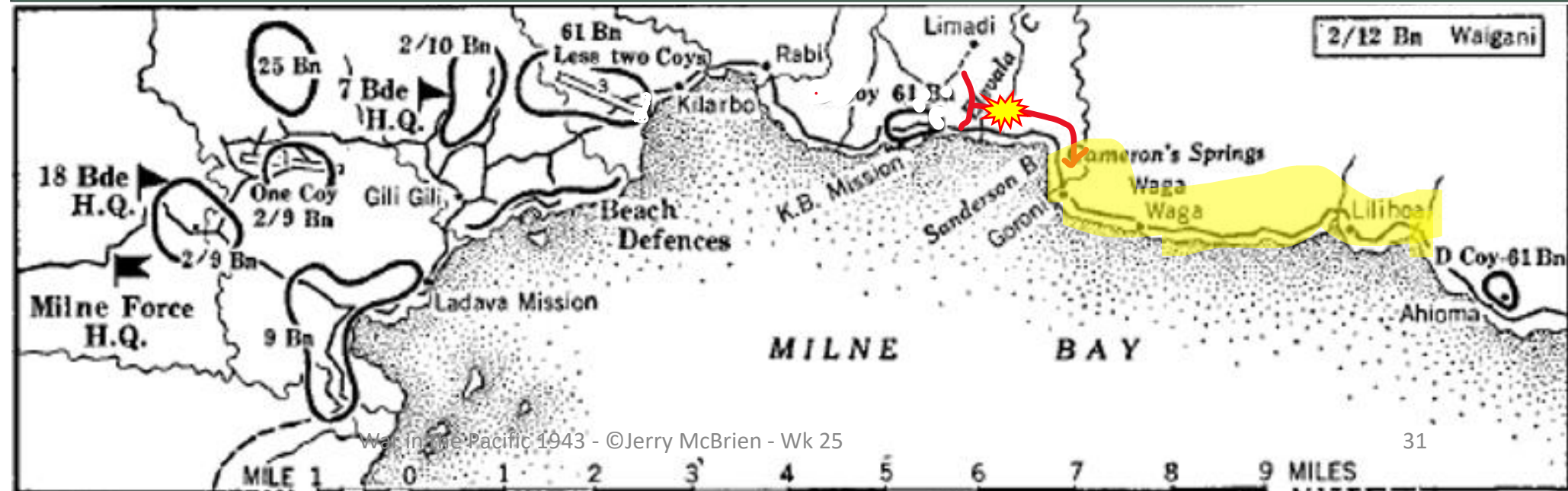
2 September



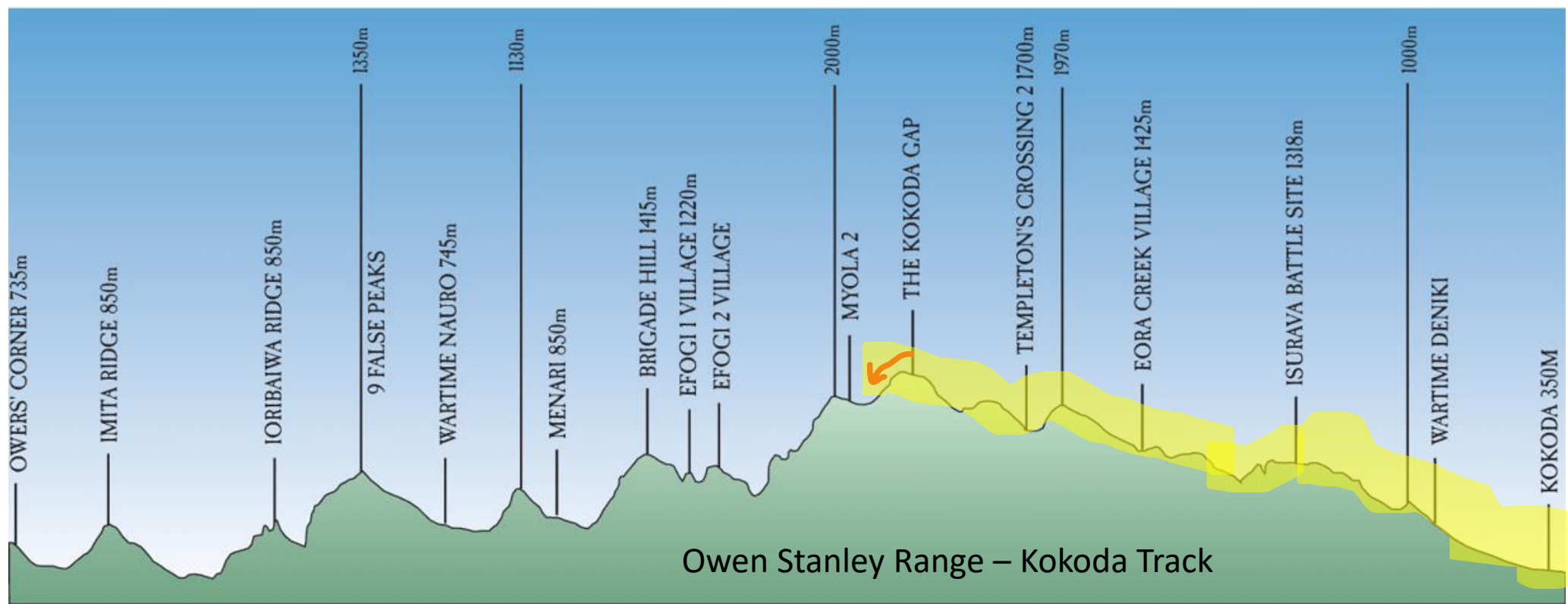
3 September



Owen Stanley Range – Kokoda Track



4 September



Owen Stanley Range – Kokoda Track





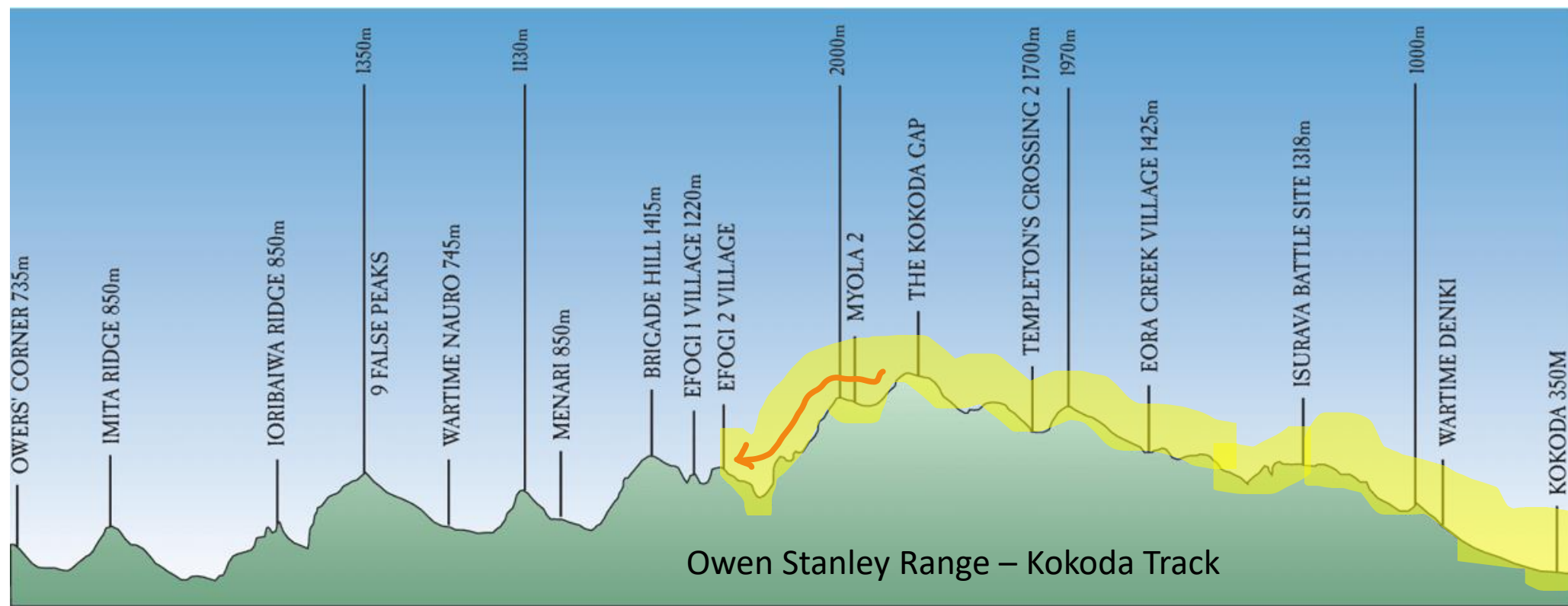
# Guadalcanal

- Between 29 August and **4 September**, Japanese light cruisers, destroyers, and patrol boats were able to land almost 5,000 troops at Taivu Point, east of the Lunga perimeter, including most of the 35th Infantry Brigade, much of the Aoba (4th) Regiment, and the rest of Ichiki's regiment.
- General Kawaguchi, who landed at Taivu Point on the 31 August Express run, was placed in command of all Japanese forces on Guadalcanal.
- A barge convoy took another 1,000 soldiers of Kawaguchi's brigade, under the command of Colonel Akinosuke Oka, to Kamimbo, west of the Lunga perimeter.



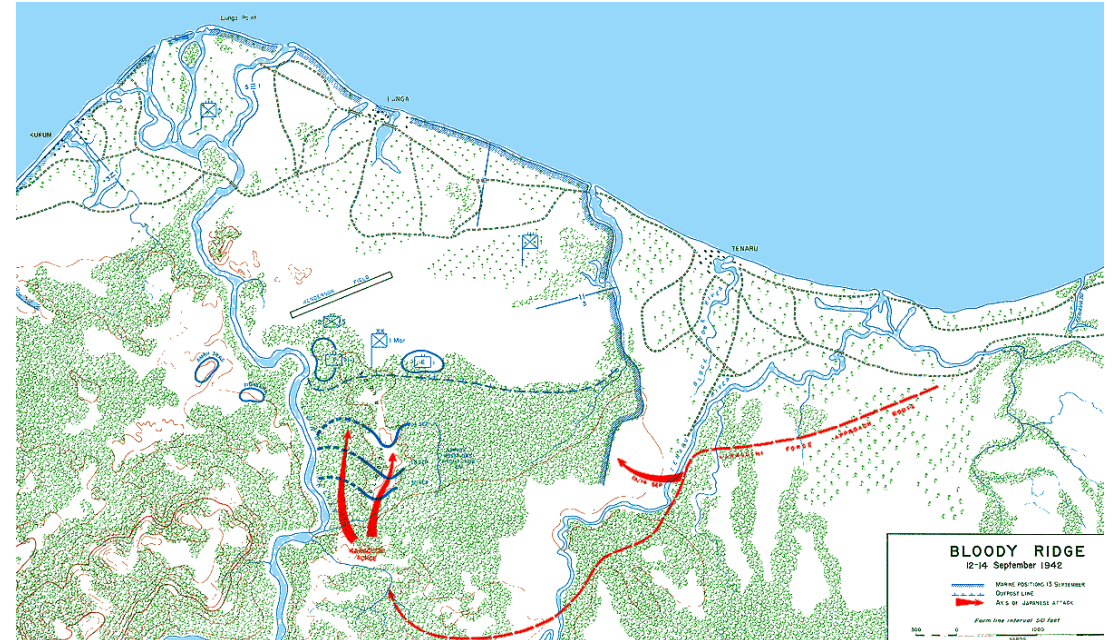
General Kiyotake Kawaguchi (1892-1961)

5 September



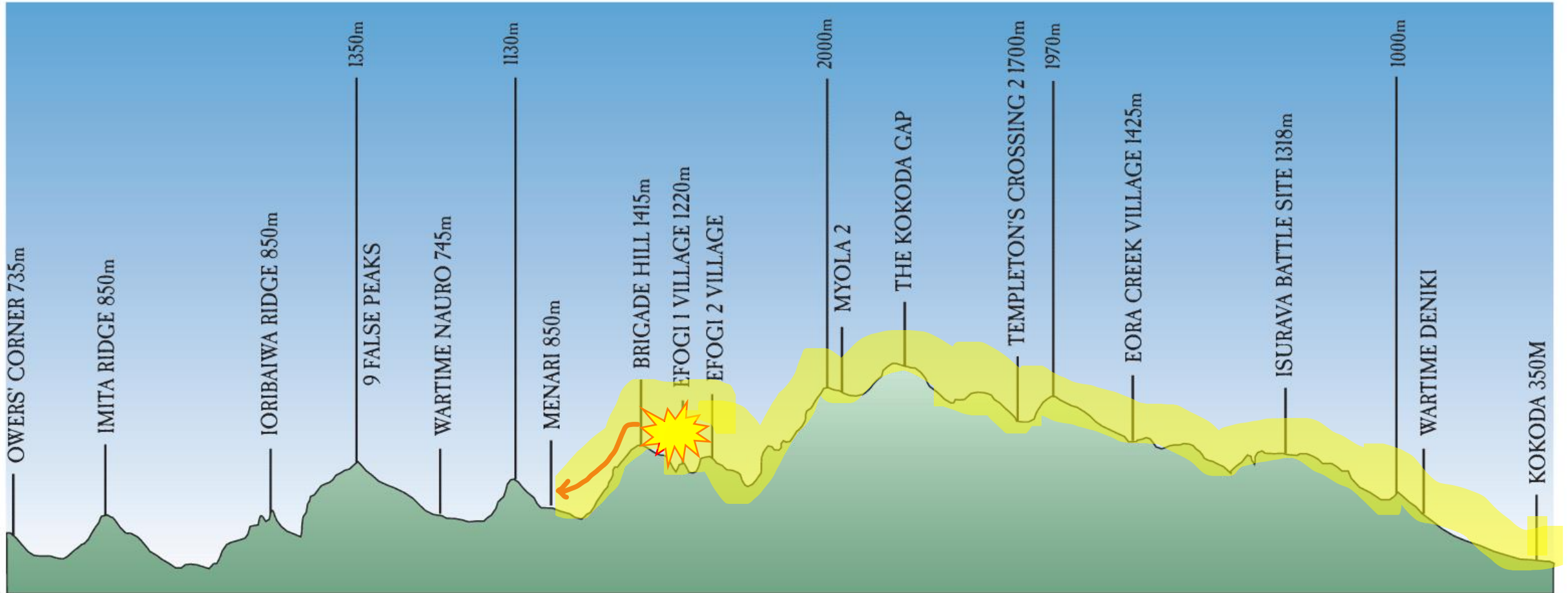
# Guadalcanal

- On **7 September**, Kawaguchi issued his attack plan to "rout and annihilate the enemy in the vicinity of the Guadalcanal Island airfield". The plan called for his forces, split into three divisions, to approach the Lunga perimeter inland, culminating with a surprise night attack.
- Oka's forces would attack the perimeter from the west while Ichiki's Second Echelon would attack from the east. The main attack would be by Kawaguchi's "Center Body", numbering 3,000 men in three battalions, from the jungle south of the Lunga perimeter.



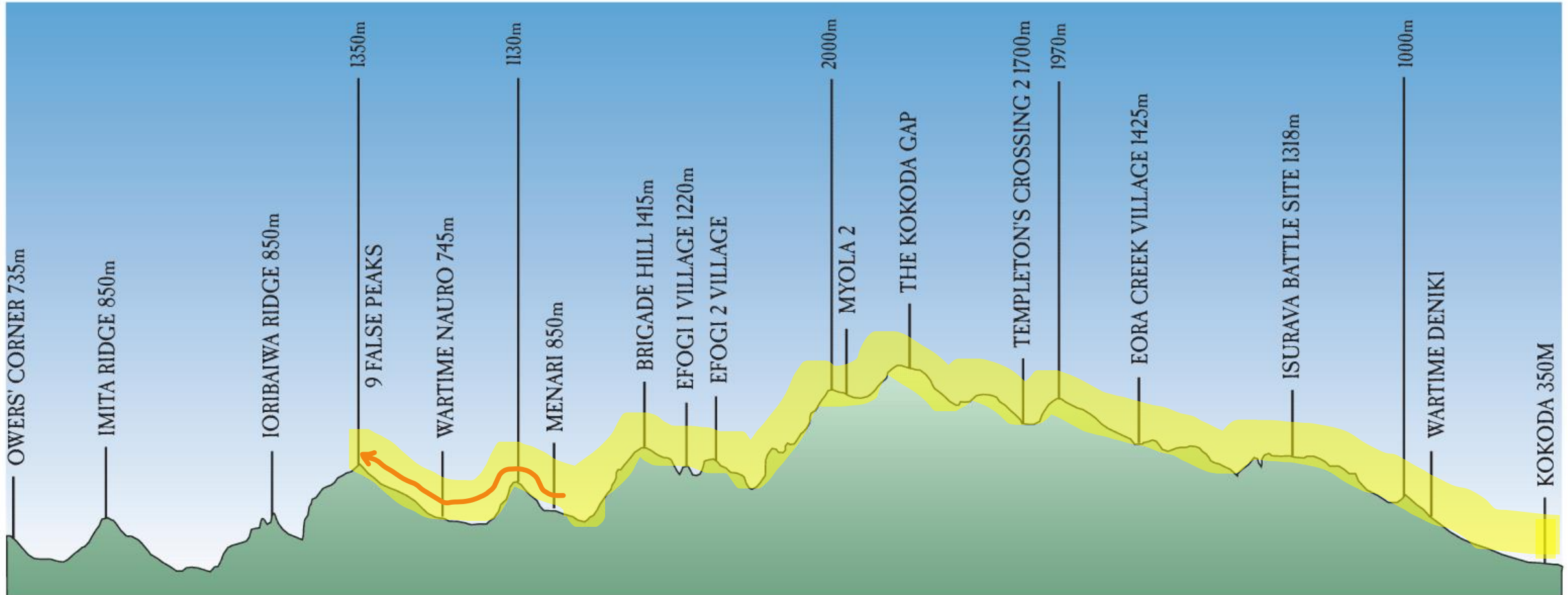
Map of the Lunga perimeter showing the approach routes of the Japanese forces and the locations of the Japanese attacks during the battle. Oka's attacks were in the west (left), the Ichiki Battalion attacked from the east (right) and the Center Body attacked "Edson's Ridge" (Lunga Ridge) in the lower center of the map

# 8 September – Kokoda



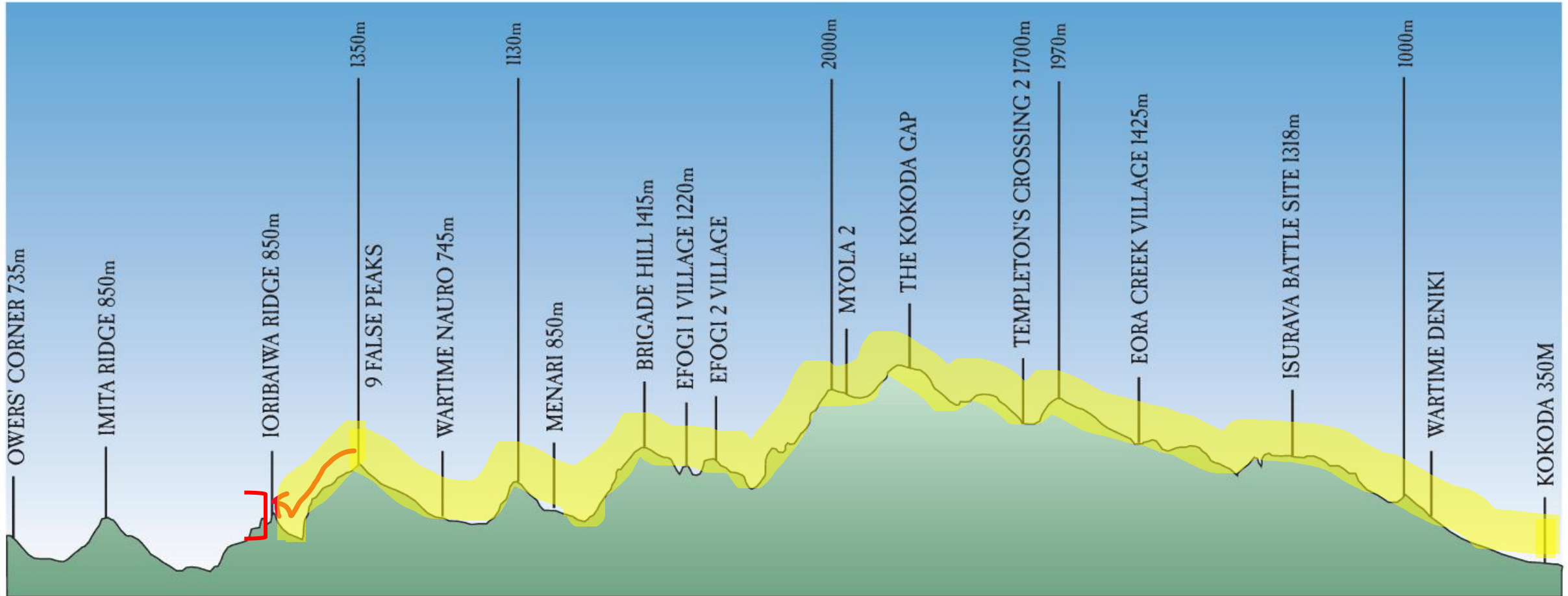
OWEN STANLEY RANGE - KOKODA TRACK

# 10 September – Kokoda



OWEN STANLEY RANGE - KOKODA TRACK

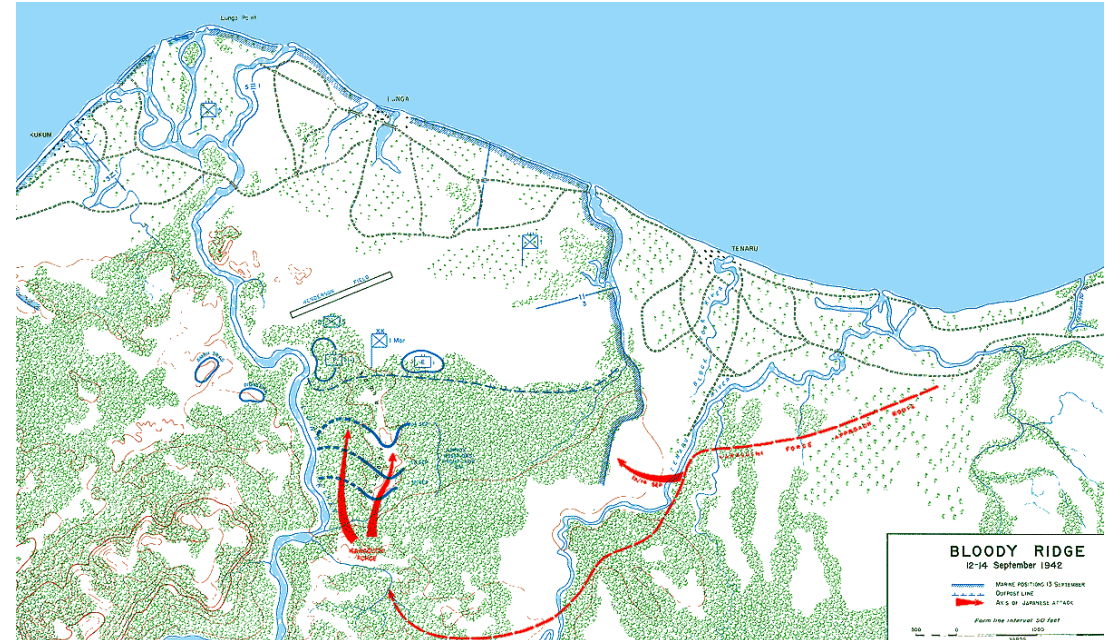
# 11 September – Kokoda



OWEN STANLEY RANGE - KOKODA TRACK

# Guadalcanal

- On the nights of 12/13 and 13/14 September, Kawaguchi's 3,000 men plus an assortment of light artillery attacked the Raiders and Parachutists between the Lunga River and ridge.
- The Marines were forced back and the line was broken in places but the assault was eventually stopped by Marine units guarding the northern part of the ridge.
- Attacks by the Kuma battalion and Oka's unit at other locations on the Lunga perimeter were also defeated.
- On 14 September Kawaguchi led the survivors of his shattered brigade on a five-day march west to the Matanikau Valley to join with Oka's unit.
- Kawaguchi's forces lost about 850 killed and the Marines 104.



Map of the Lunga perimeter showing the approach routes of the Japanese forces and the locations of the Japanese attacks during the battle. Oka's attacks were in the west (left), the Ichiki Battalion attacked from the east (right) and the Center Body attacked "Edson's Ridge" (Lunga Ridge) in the lower center of the map

# Guadalcanal

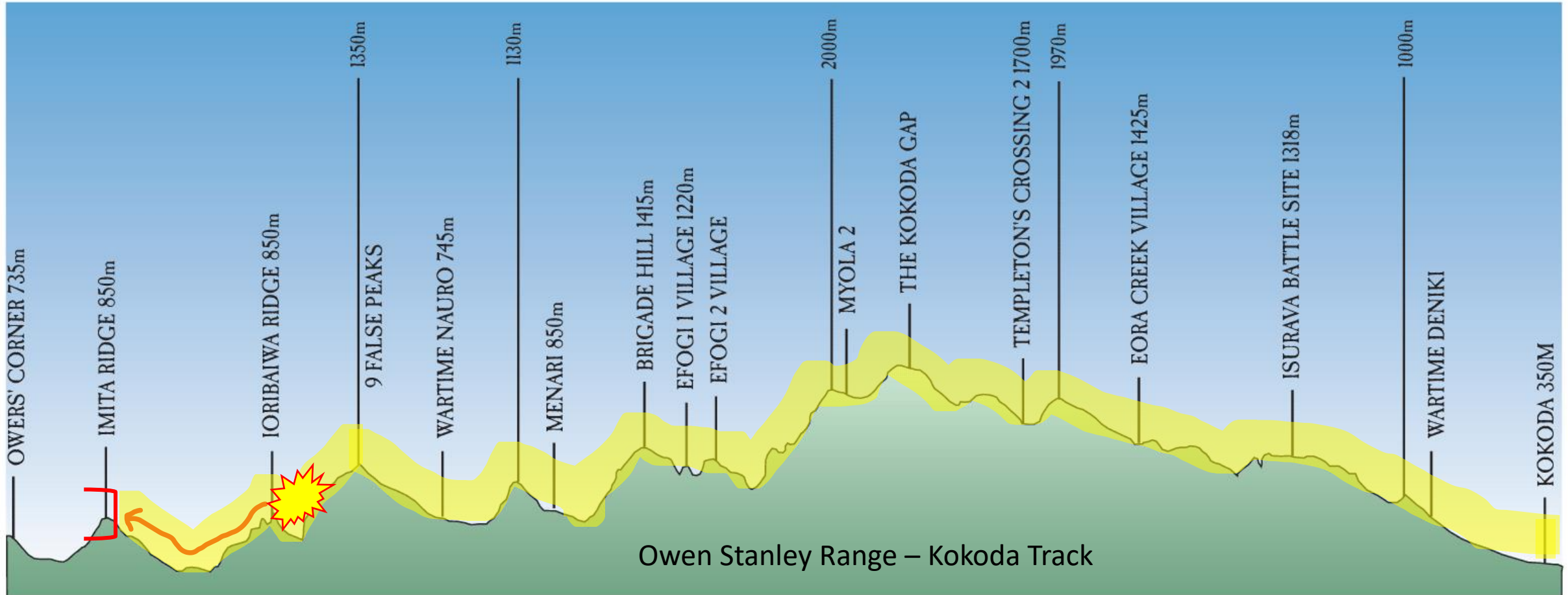
- At 1305 on **September 14** Kawaguchi led his main body out of the deadly reach of the American artillery and aircraft on the Ridge. At 2100 on the 15th Kawaguchi ordered a withdrawal across the Matanikau.
- All food had been consumed by the 14th for Kawaguchi's soldiers carried only one or two days rations from Taivu point in anticipation of living off captured American supplies.
- Already exhausted and gnawed by hunger they faced a march across the upper reaches of the Lunga in the jumble of sharp spined ridges that constituted a part of Mount Austen, some of the most difficult terrain on Guadalcanal.
- Nearly every soldier was employed in carrying the wounded, who were loaded four to each tent sheet. Four of the able bodied hefted each of these makeshift litters while a fifth man carried the party's weapons. Four more able bodied men stood by to relieve the first group.
- For five or six days the columns struggled over the repetitious slippery slopes of jungle ridges and down into the sticky mud of a succession of jungle streams.
- Lacking even one grain of rice to sustain them they ate betel nuts and weeds.
- As the strength of the unwounded waned all heavy weapons were abandoned and then one by one rifles fell from weakened hands until nearly half were gone.
- Kawaguchi reached Kokumbona at 1400 on **September the 19th**.
- Kawaguchi's artillery unit tried to follow Kawaguchi but became lost and wandered for three weeks in the jungle losing all their weapons and becoming severely malnourished. Had they not fortunately established radio contact on the 23rd they might all have perished.



General Kiyotake Kawaguchi (1892-1961)



# 16 September – Kokoda

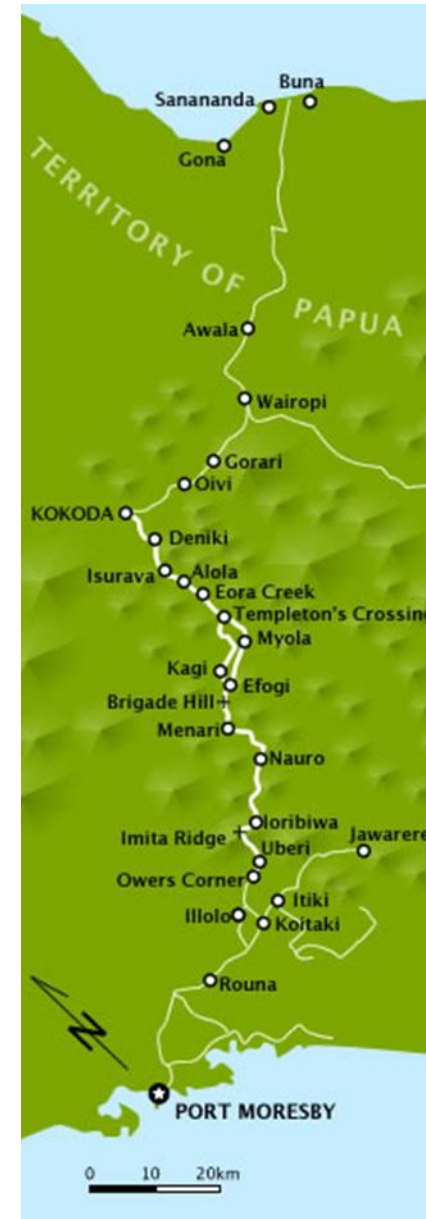


General Rowell, in turn, underlined those instructions in a message to Allen which read:

“... We are now so far back that any further withdrawal is out of question and Eather must fight it out at all costs. ...”

# Kokoda

- On receipt of these instructions, Horii had pressed through the Gap, looking for a defensible position on the other side of the range which he could hold until he was ordered to resume the advance. His first choice had been Nauro, but after sending out a reconnaissance party forward he chose Ioribaiwa as the place to make his stand.
- The day after its seizure the troops holding it were told that they were to wait there until the middle of the following month, when it was expected that the final push against Port Moresby would be undertaken.
- On **20 September** General Horii called together his commanders at a hill near his headquarters at Nauro and told them how things stood. He praised them for the way in which they and their men had succeeded in crossing "the so-called impregnable Stanley Range," and explained that the reason for the halt was to regain their fighting strength, so as to be able, at the proper time, "to strike a crushing blow at the enemy's positions at Port Moresby."



# Imperial Headquarters

- Following the destruction of the Kawaguchi Detachment on the night of 13-14 September, in the Battle of Edson's Ridge. Imperial General Headquarters felt impelled once again to revise its operational plan for Port Moresby.
- On **18 September** new orders were issued which emphasized that everything was to be subordinated to the retaking of Guadalcanal.
- Existing positions in New Guinea were to be held as long as possible, but the South Seas Detachment was to be absolved of the responsibility of maintaining itself indefinitely in the southern foothills of the Owen Stanley Range.
- Instead, it was to begin preparations at once for the defense of the Buna-Gona beachhead, which it was to hold as its primary defensive position until again ordered to advance.



General Sugiyama, army chief of staff, seen here inspecting Japanese landing sites in Shanghai, 1938

# 19 September - Guadalcanal

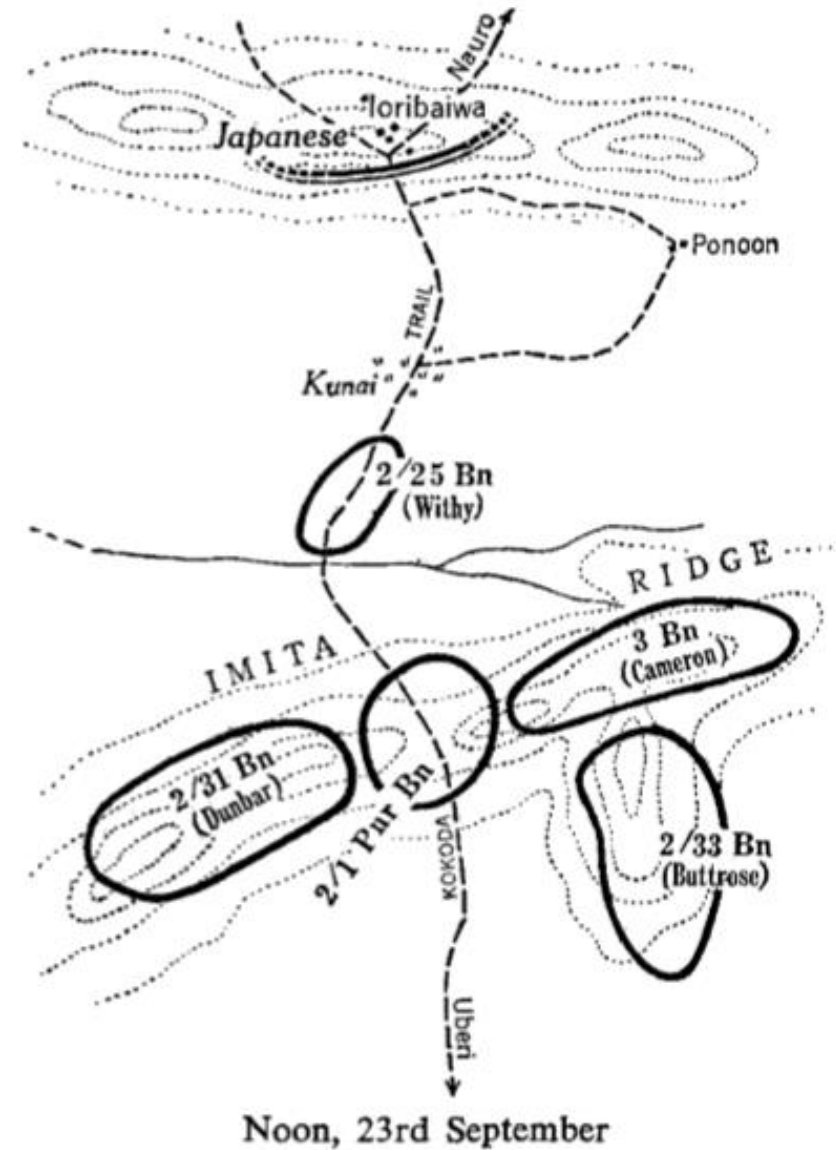
- On 19 September, Vandegrift's operational Plan 11-42 provided for a complete perimeter defence.
- Vandegrift and his staff frankly admitted that the new scheme was a “cordon defence of the worst type”. These had been rejected by staff colleges everywhere, since Napoleonic times, for their vulnerability to an enemy who massed his artillery and infantry against one point.
- The plan also contained the unprecedented statement that “The defense of Guadalcanal will be primarily by air”
- The Marines, based on their own recent experience, believed that the Japanese displayed little imagination in their planning and entertained a faulty concept of the effectiveness of modern massed firepower. The continuous perimeter defence would prevent the Japanese’s favourite infiltration tactics being effective. And they were confident that Marine rifle units in well prepared, well wired positions backed by well prepared artillery and mortars could defeat Japanese attacks even when heavily outnumbered.
- For the first time men and weapons were protected by barbed wire which had come in with the Seventh Marines. No longer would they be dependent on a single strand of trip wire salvaged from coconut plantation fences.
- The Perimeter fire power was boosted by a decision made years ago in Washington to arm each of the Corps’ amphibian tractors with five machine guns, one .5 and four .3s. The amphibian tractor battalion had a hundred of these vehicles giving 500 machine guns, which were quickly transferred from the vehicles to the perimeter cordon.

# Kokoda

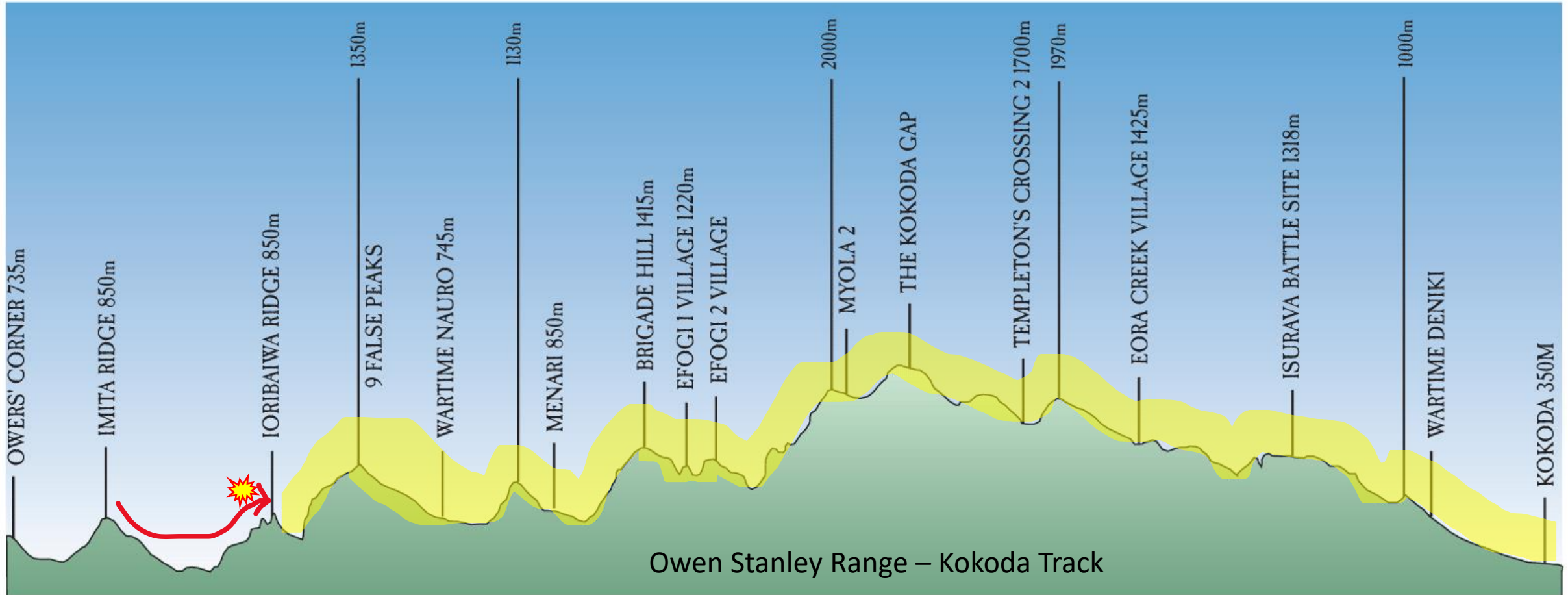
- To implement this plan Horii allotted the rearguard role to Colonel Kusunose's 144th Regiment, which prepared to hold at Ioribaiwa with two battalions and some supporting troops while the rest of the force fell back.
- The main body of the 41st Regiment (less elements which were given a role along the track) were to fall right back to the coast to make firm there the positions to which the rest of the troops could retire.
- In accordance with this plan Colonel Yazawa moved swiftly and was already back at Giruwa when the Australians struck their main blow at Ioribaiwa on 28th September. By that time also the units of the 144th Regiment had left their rearguard positions at Ioribaiwa and were intent on keeping as far ahead of the advancing Australians as possible.

# 28 Sept – New Guinea

- By nightfall on the 27th, with the Japanese positions under artillery bombardment, Buttrose and Dunbar were closing in on Ioribaiwa from the flanks while
- Withy's men, who had pressed slowly forward, had penetrated barriers and defence works which blocked the track and were in fleeting touch.
- Eather proposed to launch his men at the Ioribaiwa positions next day.
- On the 28th the attack went forward as planned but there was no opposition. The Japanese had abandoned their positions and much equipment. By the end of the day the three battalions were in occupation of the Ioribaiwa area.



# 28 September – Kokoda



# 29 September - Kokoda

- **Land**

- At Ioribaiwa the 3rd Battalion joined them on the 29th.
- By that time offensive patrols were already pushing forward towards Nauro where one of them, under Captain Andrew of the 2/25th, arrived on the 30th to find that it too had been abandoned.

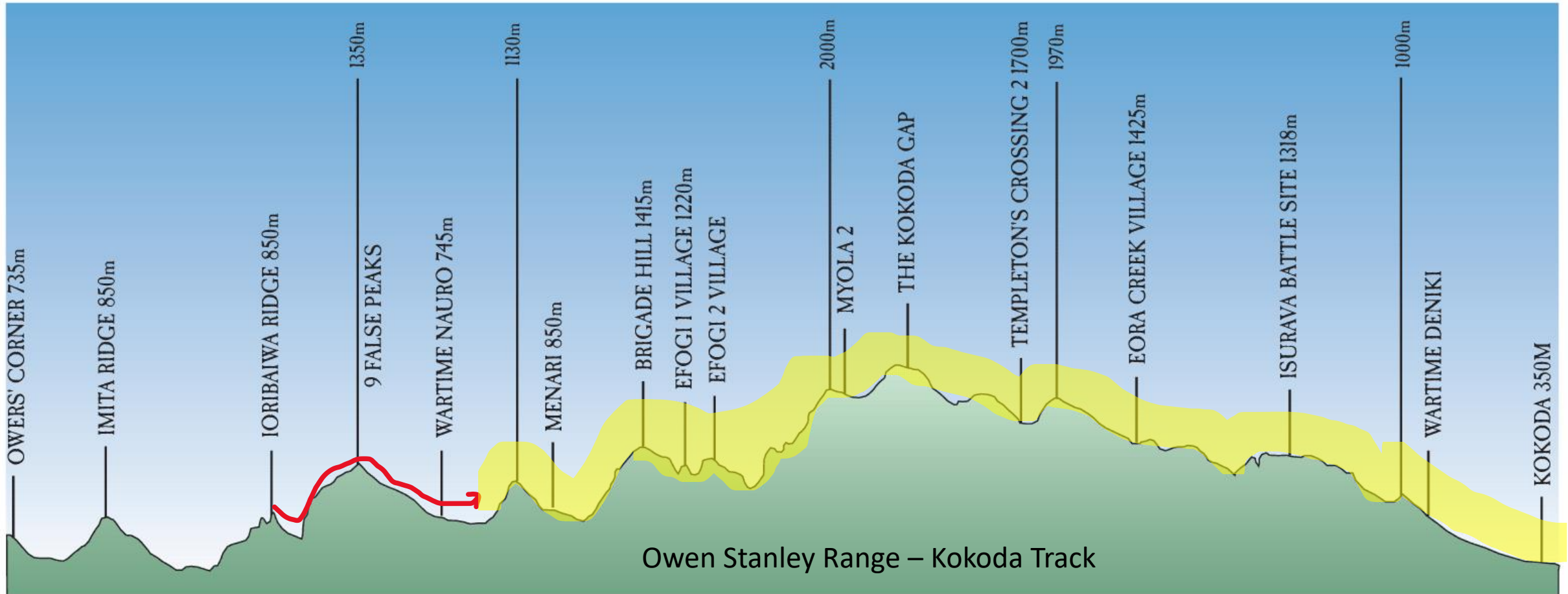
- **Air**

- 2 B-17's bomb barges and AA positions at Buna 18.15/29 destroying 6 barges and one AA position.
- 1 B17 bombs A/F at Salamaua 11.48/29. Results not observed.
- A single A-20 bombs enemy camps Menari area 0805/29. Results not observed.





# 1 October – Kokoda



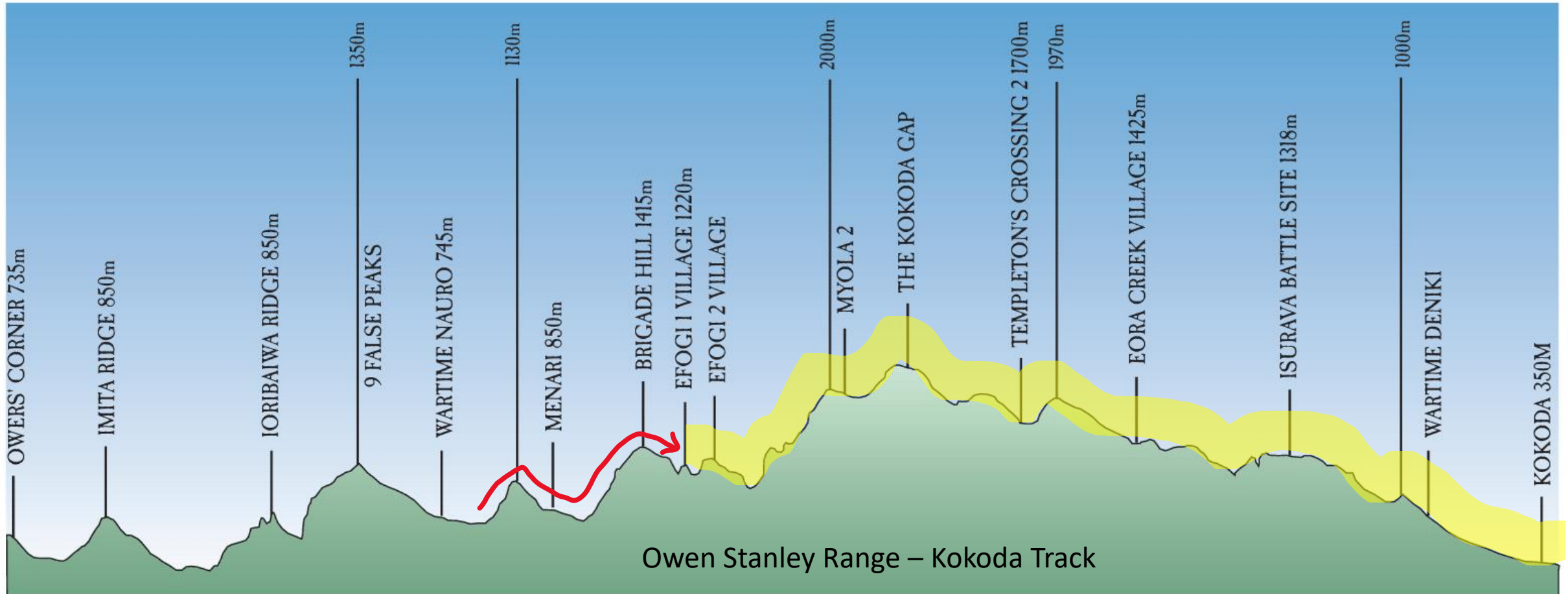
Patrols had already found Nauro unoccupied and had gone on toward Menari. The 3rd Battalion led the advance.

## 2 October – New Guinea

- The 3rd Battalion found evidence of hasty Japanese withdrawal:
- bodies and equipment lay along the track.
- By the early afternoon of the 2nd the leading company was at Menari and was continuing towards Efogi without opposition.
- Colonel Cameron reported that the area between Loribaiwa and Nauro seemed to have been occupied by some 2,000 men;
- that his troops had buried twelve Japanese on whom there were no signs of wounds;
- that there was evidence that the invaders had been reduced to eating wood, grass, roots and fruits which were known to be inedible, and that dysentery was rife among them.
- He found the bodies of two Australians, one bound to a tree, one decapitated.
- Behind the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion the 2/25th moved out from Loribaiwa on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October. The other two battalions were to follow on.



# 4 October – Kokoda



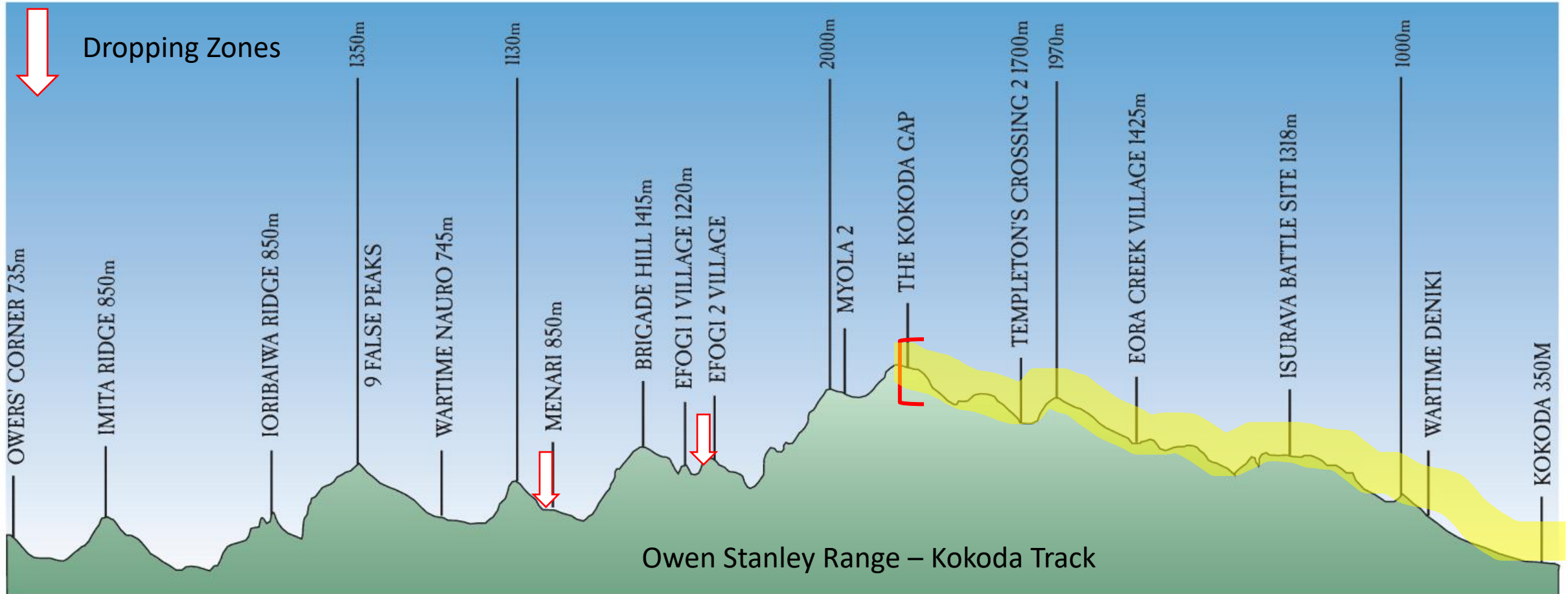
On the afternoon of the 4th October Boag reached Efogi and reported it clear.

# 7 October - Kokoda

- The men of the 2/33rd Battalion, moving behind Marson and Cameron, were clearing distressing evidence of the fighting which had taken place between Menari and Efogi nearly a month before.
- On the 7<sup>th</sup> (October) they buried there the bodies of some 55 Australians as well as many Japanese dead;
- next day they buried 20 more.

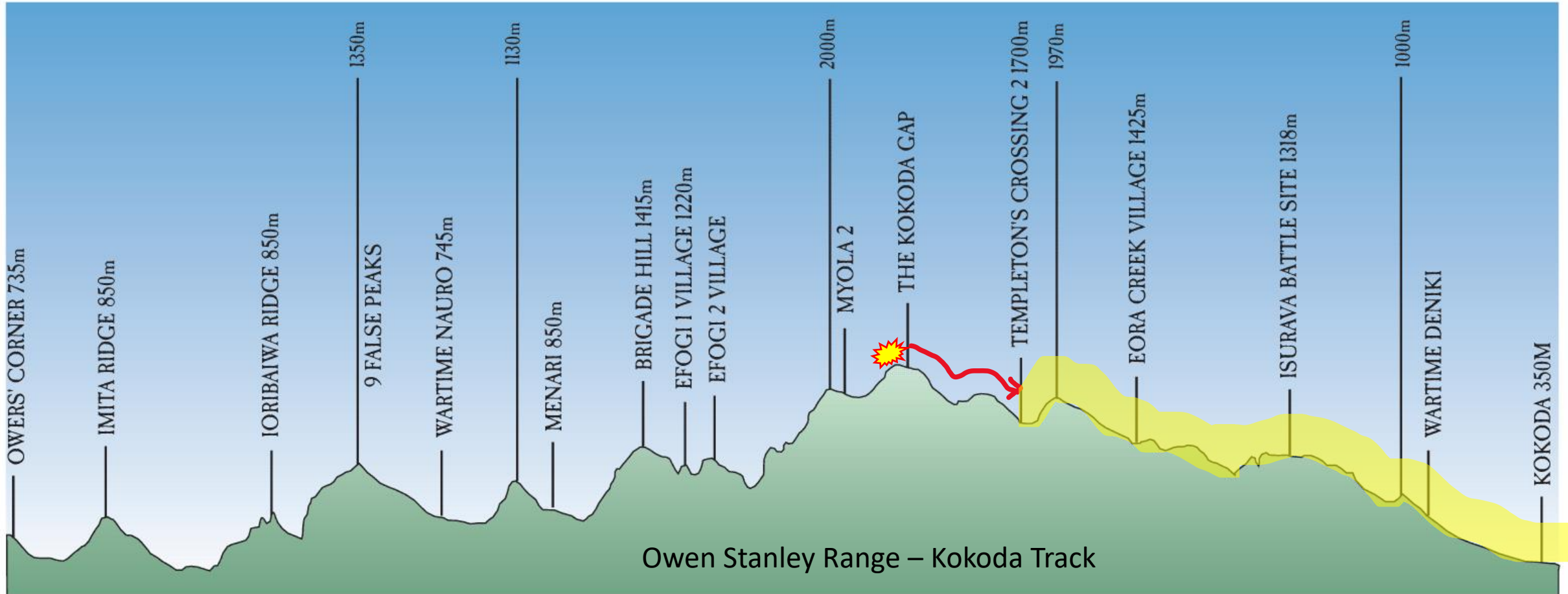


# 8 October – Kokoda



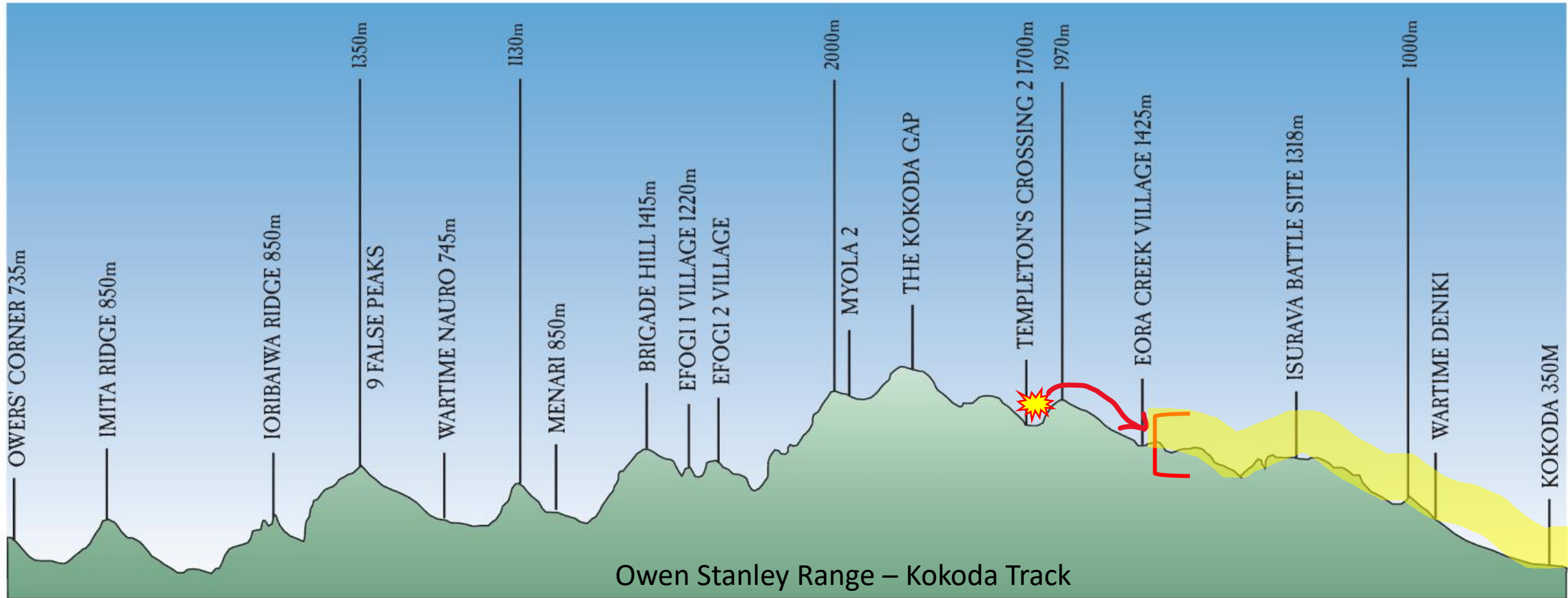
On the 8<sup>th</sup> it seemed that the Australians had overtaken the Japanese rearguard between Myola and Templeton's Crossing. Menari was in use as a dropping ground and one of Cameron's companies had already prepared an area at EfoGI for the same purpose.

# 12 - 16 October – Kokoda



After three days of attacks in Platoon and Company strength, on the main track on the 15<sup>th</sup> the 3rd Battalion swung round the left of the 2/33rd as planned, but only the hot ashes of recent fires remained in the Japanese positions. On moving into attack in the morning of 16th Marson also found that the opposition had melted away.

# 20 – 22 October – Kokoda



On the 20<sup>th</sup> 16 Brigade took up the attack. As we dug in for the night (after a day attacking) a desolate scene was presented: our own and enemy dead lying in grotesque positions, bullet-scarred trees with the peeled bark showing ghostlike, our own lads digging silently. And with the coming of darkness came the rain, persistent and cold, and in this atmosphere we settled in our weapon pits for the night. At night we could hear the Jap chattering and moving about.

# Guadalcanal

- Between 1 and 17 October, the Japanese delivered 15,000 troops to Guadalcanal, giving 20,000 total troops to employ for the planned offensive.
- Hyakutake decided that the main thrust of his planned attack would be from south of Henderson Field. His 2nd Division (augmented by troops from the 38th Division), under Maruyama and comprising 7,000 soldiers in three infantry regiments of three battalions each was ordered to march through the jungle and attack the American defenses from the south near the east bank of the Lunga River.
- The date of the attack was set for 22 October, then changed to **23 October**.
- To distract the Americans from the planned attack from the south, Hyakutake's heavy artillery plus five battalions of infantry (about 2,900 men) under Major General Tadashi Sumiyoshi were to attack the American defenses from the west along the coastal corridor.



Maj Gen Maruyama, sent his 2d (Sendai) Division into their costly October attacks.



# Guadalcanal

- On 12 October, a company of Japanese engineers began to break a trail, called the "Maruyama Road", from the Matanikau towards the southern portion of the U.S. Lunga perimeter. The 15-mile-long trail traversed some of the most difficult terrain on Guadalcanal, including numerous rivers and streams, deep, muddy ravines, steep ridges, and dense jungle.
- Between 16 and 18 October, the 2nd Division began their march along the Maruyama Road.
- By 23 October, Maruyama's forces still struggled through the jungle to reach the American lines. That evening, after learning that his forces had yet to reach their attack positions, Hyakutake postponed the attack to 19:00 on 24 October.
- Sumiyoshi was informed of the postponement to 24 October, but was unable to contact his troops to inform them of the delay. Thus, at dusk on 23 October, two battalions of the 4th Infantry Regiment and the nine tanks of the 1st Independent Tank Company launched attacks on the U.S. Marine defenses at the mouth of the Matanikau. U.S. Marine artillery, cannon, and small arms fire repulsed the attacks, destroying all the tanks and killing many of the Japanese soldiers while suffering only light casualties.
- Finally, late on 24 October Maruyama's forces reached the U.S. Lunga perimeter. Over two consecutive nights Maruyama's forces conducted numerous frontal assaults on positions defended by troops of the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines under Lieutenant Colonel Chesty Puller and the U.S. Army's 3rd Battalion, 164th Infantry Regiment, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Robert Hall.
- U.S. Marine and Army units armed with rifles, machine guns, mortars, and artillery, including direct canister fire from 37 mm anti-tank guns, "wrought terrible carnage" on the Japanese. A few small groups of Japanese broke through the American defenses but were hunted down and killed over the next several days.
- More than 1,500 of Maruyama's troops were killed in the attacks while the Americans lost about 60 killed.

# Guadalcanal

- The disruptive effects of the exhaustion, induced by the long jungle approach march, and then the rain and darkness now enveloped the second division's assault in dense confusion.
- In theory the Sendai Division's two wings both composed of three rifle battalions were hewing trails side-by-side towards the American line. Behind them came another 3 rifle battalions of the division reserve.
- In reality near chaos totally obscured this scheme. The evidence strongly suggests that Shoji's right wing strayed out onto a north easterly course tangential to the American perimeter.
- Whether Shoji ever contacted the perimeter remains unclear. Although the right wing made no impression on the American perimeter, about 2200 the second division headquarters received a report that the right wing had overrun the defence lines and was moving into the grass clearing east of the airfield.

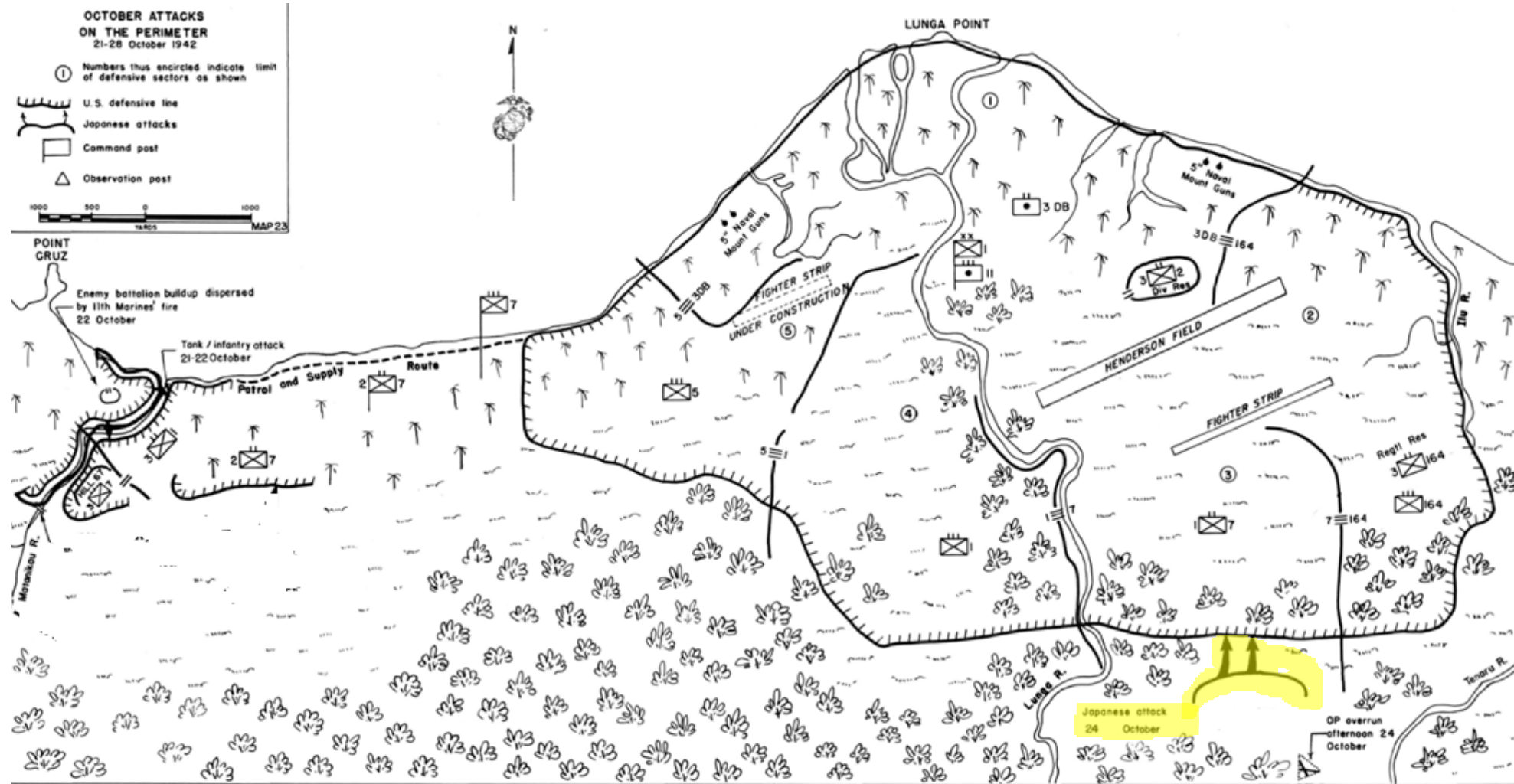


Members of the 2nd Infantry division at Guadalcanal

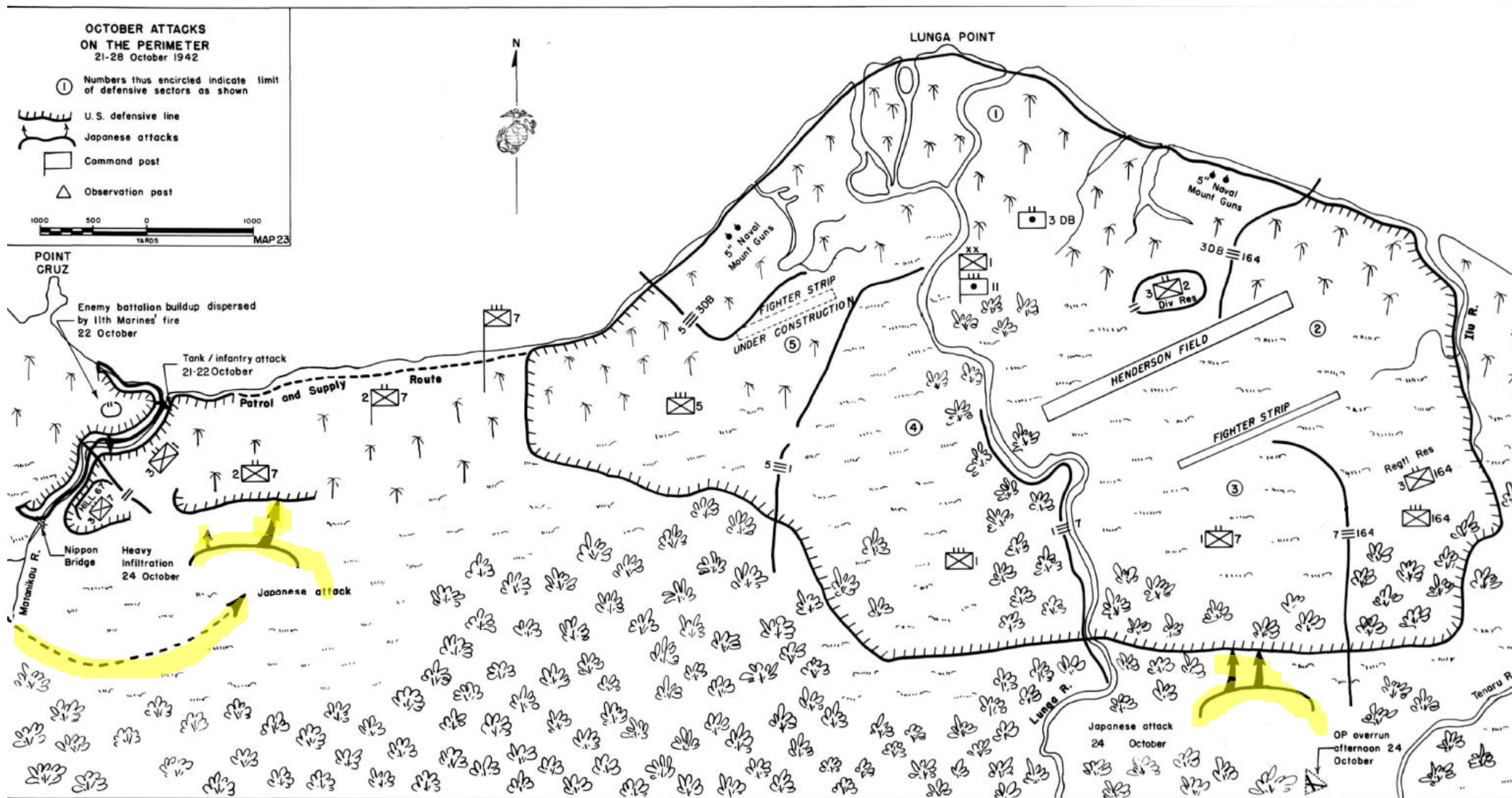
# Guadalcanal

- the damp and anxious staff of the 17th army became ecstatic when Colonel Matsumoto, operations officer of the second division, called to inform them that the airfield was in Japanese hands. Matsumoto's report may well have been the product of a literally fevered misinterpretation of news reaching him, for he had a bad case of malaria but at 0050 October 25 17th army signalled "2300 Banzai- a little before 2300 the Right Wing captured the airfield"
- During the night of 25/26 the casualty list of the left wing multiplied but the Sendai Division again fought like a boxer with only his left fist, for the right wing again missed the action for reasons that remain hard to understand.
- By 08:00 on 26 October, Hyakutake called off any further attacks and ordered his forces to retreat. Leading elements of Maruyama's 2nd Division reached the 17th Army headquarters area at Kokumbona, west of the Matanikau on 4 November.
- Devastated by battle deaths, combat injuries, malnutrition, and tropical diseases, the 2nd Division was incapable of further offensive action.
- In total, the Japanese lost 2,200–3,000 troops in the battle while the Americans lost around 80 killed.

# 25 October - Guadalcanal

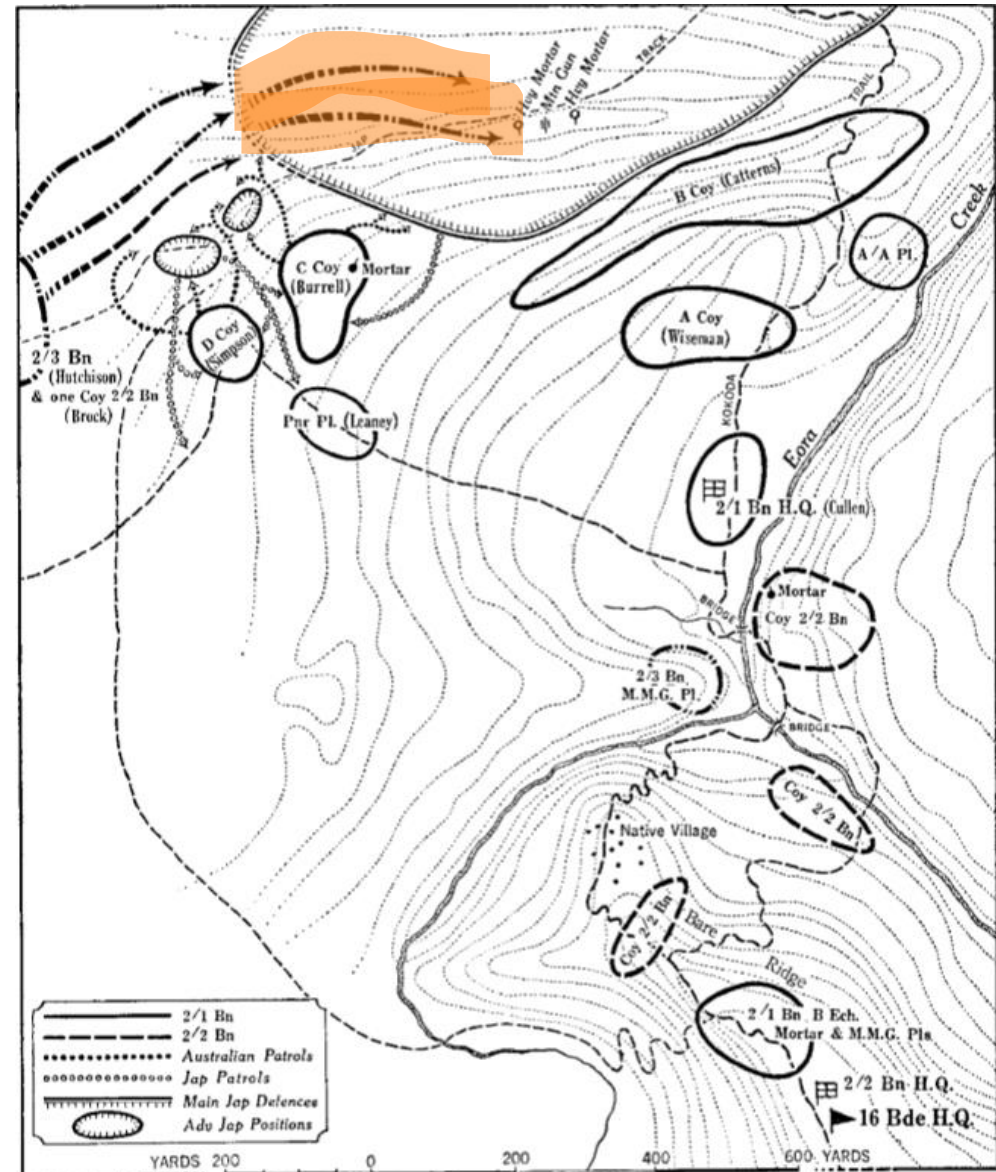


# 25/6 October – Guadalcanal



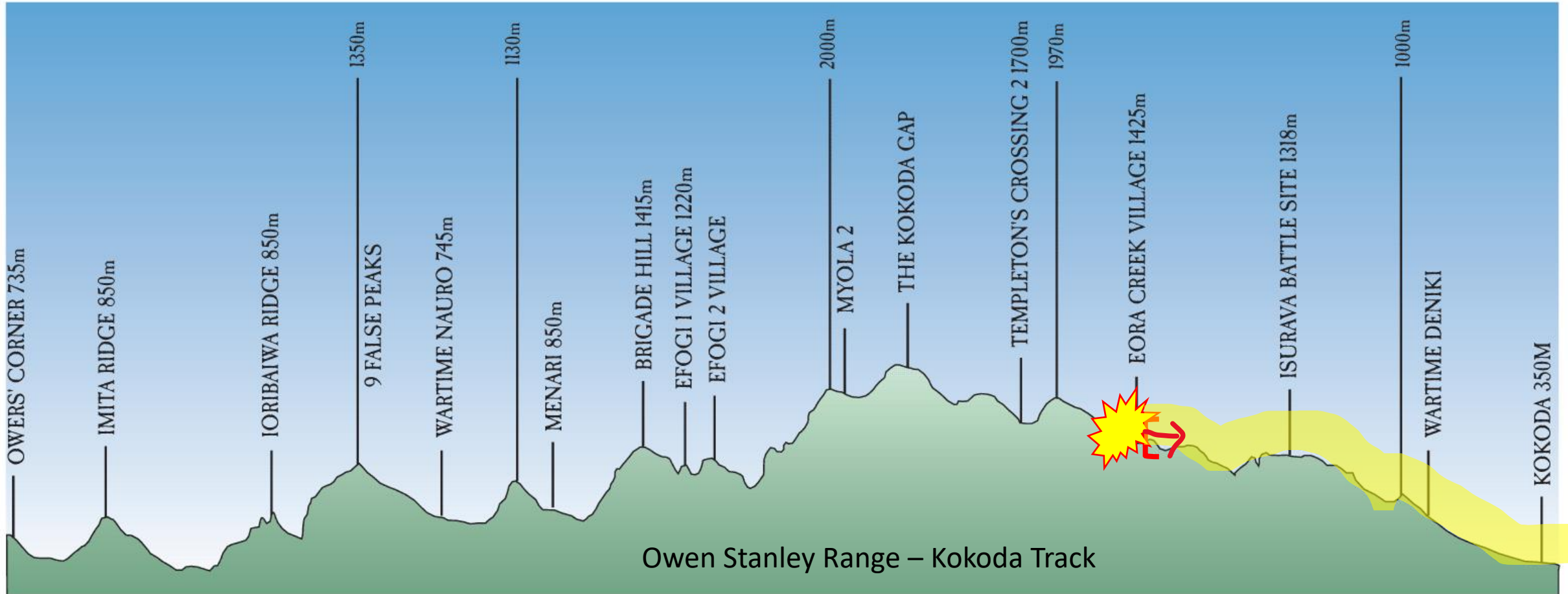
# 28 October - Kokoda

- The Japanese made a determined stand at Eora Creek.
- On the 28th after six days bitter fighting in an appalling landscape and hideous conditions the 2/3<sup>rd</sup> managed to get above the Japanese positions and sailed into them firing from the hip.
- The forward scouts were knocked out, but the men went on steadily, advancing from tree to tree until we were right through their outlying posts and into the central position.
- Suddenly the Japanese began to run out. They dropped their weapons and stumbled through the thick bush down the slope.
- In a minute or two the survivors had disappeared into the bush.

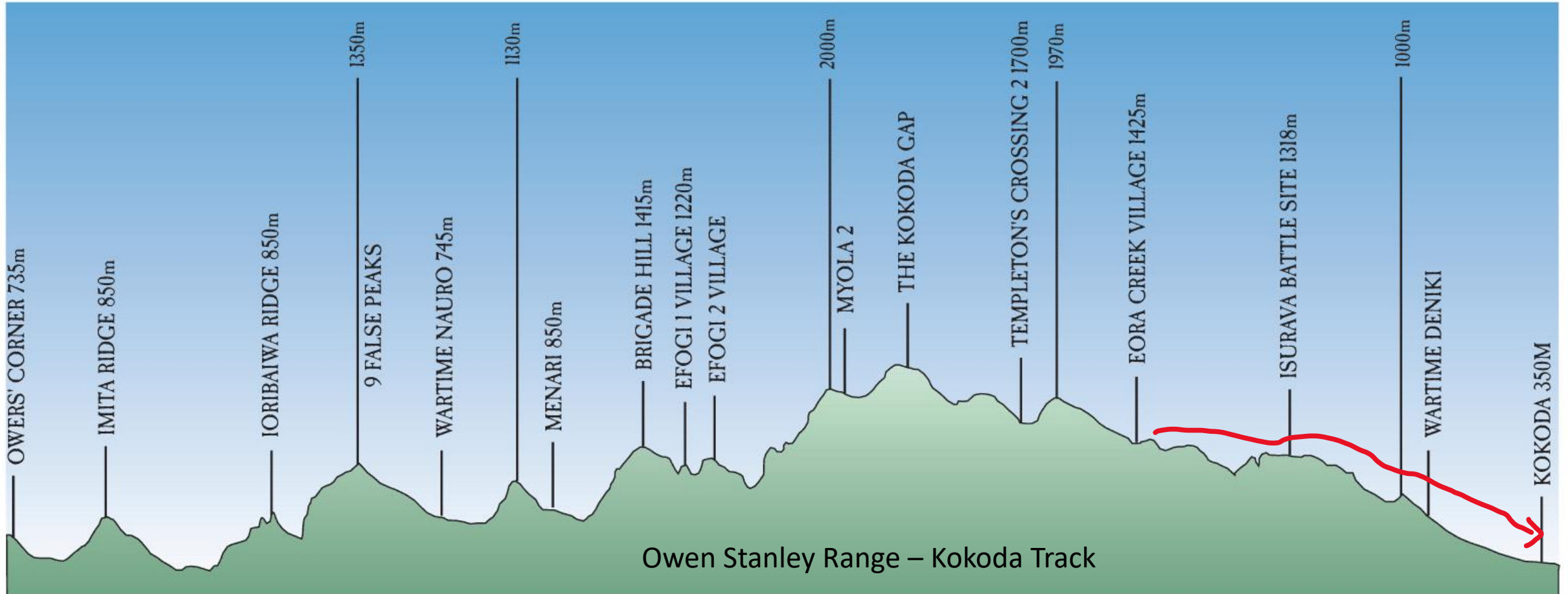


Eora Creek, 27th-28th October

# 24 - 28 October – Kokoda



# 28 October – 2 November – Kokoda





# 28 October - Guadalcanal

- American patrols continued mopping up inside and outside the perimeter on the 28<sup>th</sup>.
- American losses in the October battles were probably around 300 dead and wounded, including those hit by shelling and bombing.
- The 164<sup>th</sup> infantry buried 975 Japanese on its front, we don't have a count from the 1/7 marines burials but the 2/7<sup>th</sup> Marines counted 98 dead on their ridge and there must have been twice as many down in the gully below. The 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division estimated 2,200 Japanese killed in action.
- Col Furimiya, commanding the Japanese 29<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, evidently penetrated into the perimeter during the night of 25/6 and remained at large in the perimeter with a small group for several days. His diary was recovered when his body was found.
- Before the final entry, recording his decision to end his own life, he had noted
  - “The Imperial Staff must reconsider the matter of firepower”.

# Guadalcanal

- In his diary Lt. Minegishi wrote:
- October 27 - I never dreamed of retreating over the same mountainous trail through the jungle we crossed with such enthusiasm ... we haven't eaten for three days and even walking is difficult. On the uphill my body swayed around unable to walk. I can't imagine how the soldiers carrying the artillery are doing. I must take a rest every two metres. It is quite disheartening to have only one tiny teaspoon of salt per day and a palm full of rice porridge.
- October 28th - We had to search again for the regimental colours. The taste of even temporary defeat is bitter. Perhaps it is well for a soldier to sample such a thing once in a lifetime, but it's still very, very distasteful. We must win at any cost in this fight.
- October 29 - Sky cleared up in the morning and we saw the sun. ... I have begun to see what seems to be malnutrition ... I don't know how many men must be left today.
- October 30 - I am surprised by how food captures the mind to the degree that one is always thinking of it, I try to think of other things but can't.
- November 1st - The company reached the regimental headquarters at noon and we're told we will get provisions tomorrow evening I can hardly wait.

# Imperial Headquarters

- At Imperial Headquarters in Tokyo the last **five days of October** witnessed the first true strategic consensus on Guadalcanal. Only now did the army section fully accept the view, held for some time by the Navy section, that the fighting in the Solomons was developing into the decisive battle between Japan and the United States.
- Imperial Headquarters prepared confidently for another offensive for two reasons:
- First, Staffs in Tokyo believed the destruction of four American carriers and a battleship at the battle of the Santa Cruz islands had tilted the balance of naval power decisively in Japan's favour,
- Second, these same officers perceived that the October attack had teetered on the very edge of success. This conviction stemmed in part from Japanese reports but much more important, Tokyo eagerly consumed American news accounts acknowledging that penetrations of the defensive lines had been restored only by counterattack, exaggerating the number of Japanese troops on Guadalcanal and emphasising the fatigued state of the American forces on Guadalcanal, particularly the pilots.

# Buna/Gona

- Two ships ran in at the **beginning of November** with fresh troops and supplies and another convoy landed a formidable group in the middle of the month consisting mainly of the III Battalion, 229th Regiment, and about 300 reinforcements for the 144th Regiment.
- These newcomers were added to the Cape Endaiadere-Giropa Point sector.



# Imperial Headquarters

- In **mid October** Imperial headquarters pledged to the government to transfer 220,000 tonnes of shipping back to duty supporting Japan's war economy upon completion of the Solomons operations.
- After the failed October attack Imperial headquarters registered bids for more merchantmen and the loss of nearly 70,000 tonnes of high quality vessels in the abortive November convoy aggravated the situation.
- To meet the logistical requirements in the mid November central agreement Imperial general headquarters requested an extra 620,000 tonnes of shipping over and above that already under its control.
- In response to this petition on **November the 20th** the cabinet meeting sanctioned the transfer of another 290,000 tonnes to the army and Navy.
- On **November the 21st** at a liaison meeting with Imperial headquarters Prime Minister Tojo lectured that Japan's minimum steel production requirements for 1943 were 3.5 million tonnes.
- The diversion of the 290,000 tonnes of cargo capacity authorised the day before would reduce that output to 3 million tonnes.
- If the government surrendered the full amount requested by Imperial headquarters Japanese steel production for 1943 would fall to a disastrous 2 million tonnes.

# Imperial Headquarters

- Despite Tojo's warning, on December the 5th the Army section clamoured for more shipping, precipitating a crisis.
- In the face of demand for a further 165 thousand tonnes of shipping for the first quarter of 1943 the government buckled to the extent of parting with another 85,000 tonnes, but Tojo insisted that this was the absolute limit.
- The following night, General Shinichi Tanaka (photo), chief of the operations division, confronted Tojo in a heated face to face argument in which Tanaka importuned for reconsideration of the decision on shipping.
- For this insubordinate and ill mannered conduct Tanaka paid with his job, but he purchased his objective.
- On December the 10th the 8th area army was notified that the government had consented to release of an additional 115,000 tonnes of shipping by December the 20th, over and above that already pledged, as well as a further amount to be determined in January and thereafter.



# Imperial Headquarters

- On **December the 17th** Colonel Sanada, a newly appointed assistant to General Ayabe, the replacement for the recently dismissed Tanaka, was ordered to discuss future plans with the 8th area army at Rabaul.
- Sanada reached Rabaul on **December the 19th**. There he learned that recent local wargaming disclosed that allied aircraft would destroy the reinforcement convoys before completion of any of the necessary logistics preparations.
- During his return trip Sanada formulated a report. It's gist was that the current plans to restart an attack on Guadalcanal offered no prospect of success. Correspondingly almost no confidence existed in this venture among local Army and Navy leaders.
- He advocated giving priority to New Guinea. It was essential to avoid further attrition of aircraft and ships of the Imperial Navy. He urged an immediate withdrawal from Guadalcanal.
- Sanada reached Tokyo on **December the 25th** and immediately unveiled his report. Somewhat to his surprise the proposal to withdraw elicited no objections, Sugiyama looked rather relieved. The following day Sanada made the same presentation to the Navy section. Here he preached to the converted, for his audience had restudied the proposed operations during Sanada's travels and concluded they offered zero chance of success.

# Imperial Headquarters

- On **December the 26th** Imperial General Headquarters agreed on withdrawal.
- Between **December 27th and 29th** staff officers drafted the new plan. The Imperial Army extracted from the reluctant Imperial Navy a pledge to utilise the maximum feasible number of warships for the evacuation, including destroyers rather than just barges and small craft.
- The Imperial Army envisaged abandoning everything below the Northern Solomons but the Imperial Navy insisted on protecting the mid Solomons to keep the allies, particularly their aircraft, at a distance from Rabaul.
- The ultimate agreement on this point was what often passed as a compromise at Imperial Headquarters, each service promised to do as it wished. The Navy accepted responsibility for defence of the new Georgia Santa Isabel area and the Imperial Army would hold the Northern Solomons.
- At an audience with the emperor on **December the 28th** Gen Sugiyama and Admiral Nagano divulged the intent of Imperial Headquarters to order a withdrawal from Guadalcanal and proposed to return on **January the 4th** to present the finished plans.



# Imperial Headquarters

- On December the 26th Imperial General Headquarters agreed on withdrawal.
- Between December 27th and 29th staff officers drafted the new plan. The Imperial Army extracted from the reluctant Imperial Navy a pledge to utilise the maximum feasible number of warships for the evacuation, including destroyers rather than just barges and small craft.
- The Imperial Army envisaged abandoning everything below the Northern Solomons but the Imperial Navy insisted on protecting the mid Solomons to keep the allies, particularly their aircraft, at a distance from Rabaul.
- The ultimate agreement on this point was what often passed as a compromise at Imperial Headquarters, each service promised to do as it wished. The Navy accepted responsibility for defence of the new Georgia Santa Isabel area and the Imperial Army would hold the Northern Solomons.
- At an audience with the emperor on December the 28th Gen Sugiyama and Admiral Nagano divulged the intent of Imperial Headquarters to order a withdrawal from Guadalcanal and proposed to return on January the 4th to present the finished plans.



The Emperor as head of the Imperial General Headquarters

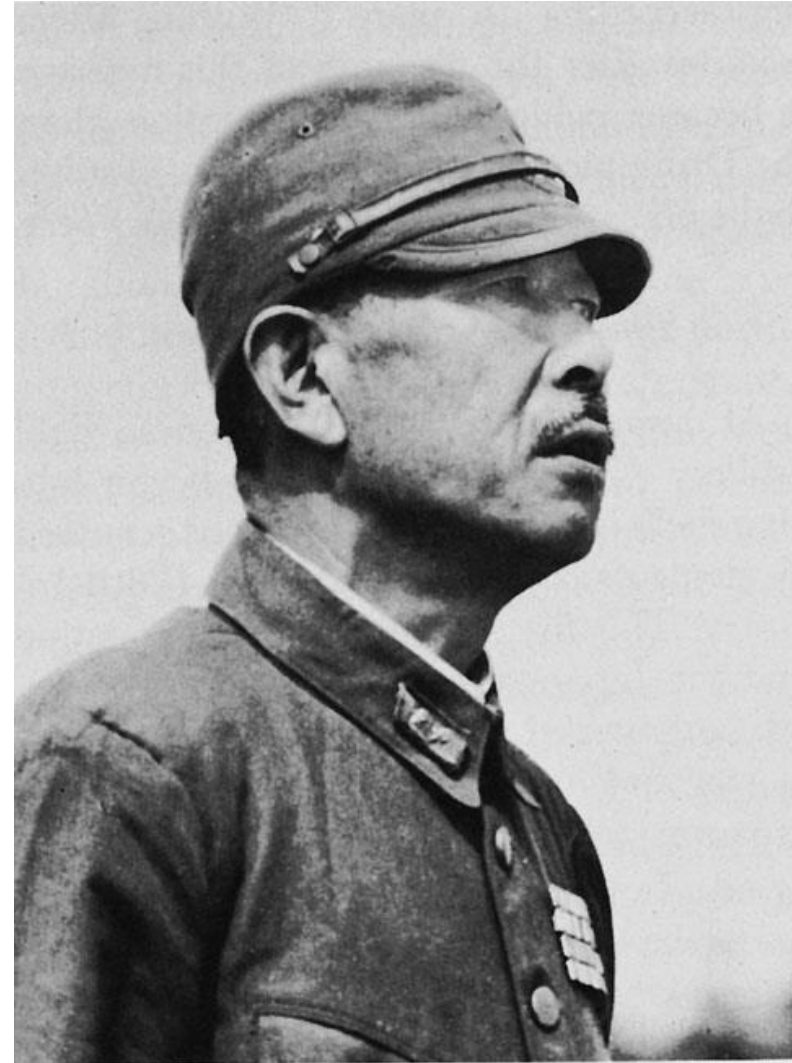
# Imperial Headquarters

- Imperial General Headquarters decided on **4 January** that, because of a critical lack of shipping and the virtual impossibility of supplying either Guadalcanal or Buna effectively, all thoughts of recapturing the one or holding the other would have to be abandoned.
- It gave orders that the forces on Guadalcanal would evacuate the island gradually by night and take up defensive positions in the northern Solomons.
- The troops at Sanananda and Giruwa, in turn, would be evacuated to Lae and Salamaua after fresh troops from Rabaul reinforced the latter two points.



# Buna/Gona

- The orders of 4 January were immediately transmitted to the 8th Area Army at Rabaul. Its commander, General Imamura, left the timing and the manner of withdrawal at Buna to General Adachi, commander of the 18<sup>th</sup> Army.
- A 51st Division unit, the 102d Infantry, Reinforced, was already on board ship waiting to move to Lae, and General Adachi (photo) ordered it forward at once.
- The ships left Rabaul the next day and, despite determined attempts by the air force to stop them, reached Lae safely on the 7<sup>th</sup>.



# Buna/Gona

- Five days went by without orders from General Adachi. On **12 January**, the day that the broken remnants of the troops began evacuating the track junction, General Oda, from his headquarters at Sanananda Village, sent the chief of staff of the 18th Army an urgent message.
- “Most of the men are stricken with dysentery. Those not . . . in bed with illness are without food and too weak for hand-to-hand fighting. . . . Starvation is taking many lives, and it is weakening our already extended lines. We are doomed.
- In several days, we are bound to meet the same fate that overtook Basabua and Buna. . . . Our duty will have been accomplished if we fight and lay down our lives here on the field. However, this would mean that our foothold in New Guinea would be lost and the sacrifices of our fellow soldiers during the past six months will have been in vain . . . urge that reinforcements be landed near Gona at once.”



# Buna/Gona

- The next day (13 January) General Adachi finally gave General Yamagata permission to begin evacuating Sanananda and Giruwa.
- According to a plan drawn by Adachi himself, the troops would withdraw to the mouths of the Kumusi and Mambare Rivers, and from there they would either march or be taken by sea to Lae and Salamaua.
- As many of the troops as possible would be evacuated in motor launches, but the rest would have to make their way westward to the Japanese-held area on the other side of Gona by slipping through the Allied lines.
- Evacuation by launch of the sick and wounded would begin at once and would continue nightly until all were evacuated.
- Because of the favorable moon, the attempt to reach the area west of Gona overland would begin on 25 January and be completed by the 29th.
- How Sanananda and Giruwa were to be held until the 25th in the desperate circumstances outlined by Oda on the 12th was not made clear.

# Buna/Gona

- By the 18th General Yamagata, with the Sanananda front collapsing about his ears, had seen enough to convince him that his troops could not wait until the 25th to abandon their positions and try to make their way through the Allied lines as General Adachi had ordered.
- He therefore drew up orders at noon on the 18th which advanced the withdrawal five days: from 25<sup>th</sup> to 20th January. After slipping through the Allied lines, his troops were to assemble near Bakumbari, a point about seven miles north of Gona, where boats would be waiting to take them to safety.

# Last week we came up with these Reasons for Japanese Success in Malaya.

- The Japanese commanders seized the initiative and retained it by an energetic offensive.
- Command of the air and sea helped.
- Their equipment was appropriate to the environment and their planning got equipment such as the collapsible boats forward when required.
- Chapman reports that their forces were adept at living and equipping themselves off the country and also evidences energy and diligence.
- Success at night attacks like the landings on Hong Kong and Singapore Islands could not have been possible without a significant level of unconstrained initiative in the lower ranks.
- But it seems to me that a significant factor in their success was that both Japanese commanders and Japanese troops were prepared to accept a higher level of casualties before stopping their attacks than the allied forces were prepared to accept before withdrawing.

# In New Guinea and the Solomons

- Admiral King took the initiative and the Japanese never managed to recover it.
- Command of the air and sea was disputed and ultimately taken by the Allies.
- The Japanese skill at living off and equipping themselves from rice growing Asian economies did not work in the Solomons and New Guinea where there was no rice, no bicycles and no roads to ride on.
- Absent command of the sea and air and absent the initiative, Japanese logistics capacity was very limited.
- Preparedness to accept casualties makes your attack more powerful but if the attack nevertheless fails it makes defeat much more expensive.
- It was proved that fire power matters.
- Japanese military and air commanders seem to have been very strategically aggressive but the navy failed to make full use of its strength at a number of points in the battle.



# Admiral Nagano

- Osami Nagano was a Marshal Admiral of the Japanese navy.
- In April 1941, he became Chief of the Imperial Japanese Navy General Staff.
- In this capacity, he served as the navy's commander-in-chief in the Asia-Pacific theatre until his removal in February 1944.
- After the war, he was arrested by the International Military Tribunal for the Far East but died of natural causes in prison during the trial.



Admiral Osami Nagano (second from left) sits next to a United States Military Police Officer at the International Military Tribunal of the Far East held at the War Ministry Building in Tokyo, Japan.

# General Sugiyama

- As Army Minister in 1937, Sugiyama was a driving force behind the launch of hostilities against China in retaliation for the Marco Polo Bridge Incident.
- After being named the Army's Chief of Staff in 1940, he became a leading advocate for expansion into Southeast Asia and preventive war against the United States.
- Upon the outbreak of hostilities in the Pacific, Sugiyama served as the army's commander-in-chief until his removal by Prime Minister Hideki Tojo in February 1944.
- Following Tojo's ouster in July 1944, he was reappointed to the post of Army Minister in Kuniaki Koiso's cabinet until its dissolution in April 1945.
- Ten days after Japan's surrender on 2 September 1945, he committed suicide.



General Sugiyama inspecting Japanese landing sites in Shanghai, 1938

# Genera Adachi

- On 9 November 1942, Adachi was appointed commander in chief of the newly formed 18th Army on Rabaul and the north coast of New Guinea.
- The defeat of the Imperial Japanese Navy in the Solomon Islands campaign, and the landings of US forces at Aitape and Hollandia isolated the vast majority of Adachi's forces.
- His forces, suffering from malaria, heat exhaustion and malnutrition were rendered ineffective for the remainder of the war.
- At the end of the war, Adachi was taken into custody by the Australian government and charged with war crimes in connection with mistreatment and arbitrary execution of prisoners of war.
- Although not personally involved in any of the atrocities mentioned, Adachi insisted on absorbing command responsibility for the actions of his subordinates during the military tribunal.
- On 12 July 1947 he was sentenced to imprisonment for life.
- On 10 September that year he killed himself in his quarters in the prisoners' compound at Rabaul with a paring knife.



Major General Horace Robertson accepts the sword of Japanese Lieutenant General Hatazō Adachi.

# General Shinichi Tanaka

- Shinichi Tanaka attended the Military Academy and after graduating in 1913 he joined the Japanese Army.
- In March 1937 Tanaka was appointed section chief of the Military Affairs Bureau. After two years in Tokyo he became chief of staff of Mongolia Garrison Army.
- Promoted to lieutenant general he became chief of the Military Operations Sections.
- In December after his contretemps with Tojo he was sent to reinforce Guadalcanal.
- After criticizing Hideki Tojo in a conversation with a fellow officer he was demoted and posted to the Southern Army in Saigon.
- In March 1943 Tanaka was sent to Burma as commander of 18th Division. Abandoned by General Masaki Honda, Tanaka's men were badly defeated by General Joseph Stilwell and his troops.
- He was badly wounded in May 1945 but he survived the war. Shinichi Tanaka died in 1969.



# Lt Gen Cyril Clowes

- Clowes was born at Warwick Queensland, and entered Duntroon in 1911. In August 1914 he graduated and was appointed lieutenant in the AIF with a commission in the Permanent Military Force.
- He landed at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915, serving as a forward observation officer directing naval gunfire against Turkish positions. He was wounded at Gallipoli.
- On the Western Front during 1916, Clowes was awarded the Military Cross. He received a promotion to major in January 1917 and in 1918 was awarded the Distinguished Service Order for his work at Villers-Bretonneux.
- When the Second World War began, Clowes was made a temporary brigadier in the AIF, and in April 1940 was appointed Commander Artillery, I Corps. Clowes performed very well under pressure in directing the fighting withdrawal at Pinios Gorge, Greece, in April 1941. Clowes was successful in holding the gorge against a strong German tank attack, until the situation on other parts of the front stabilised.



MAJOR-GENERAL CYRIL CLOWES  
COMMANDER OF THE AUSTRALIAN  
FORCES IN THE MILNE BAY AREA.

# Lt Gen Cyril Clowes

- Clowes returned to Australia in January 1942, was promoted to temporary Major General, and given command of the 1st Division.
- Clowes was given command of Milne Force. He reached Milne Bay and assumed command of the Australian troops there four days before the Japanese began landing.
- Milne Bay is a very high rainfall area, and the all-pervading mud made transport a constant problem for Clowes. He had no barges or four-wheel drive vehicles for moving troops around.
- Milne Force included the highly trained 18th Infantry Brigade of the Australian 7th Division, but also the 7th Militia Brigade. Of the total force of 8,824, only about 4,500 were infantry.
- Several times during the battle, urgent signals arrived from MacArthur and Blamey, warning of imminent Japanese reinforcements, and urging him to pursue and exterminate the enemy landing force immediately. However, Clowes' original orders confirmed that his priority was holding the completed airstrip at Gili Gili. He maintained a defensive perimeter there which was never penetrated, even while taking the fight to the enemy at some distance from this base.
- MacArthur was responding to inaccurate intelligence. Clowes had no choice but to heed the new intelligence, and try to relocate his forces to deal with threats that in fact did not materialise.

# Lt Gen Cyril Clowes

- MacArthur and Thomas Blamey determined that rather than being commended and rewarded for the victory, Clowes should be relieved of his command and sidelined for the duration of the war, for showing insufficient "vigour".
- Blamey wrote to Sydney Rowell, now Clowes' superior officer in Port Moresby:
- "My Dear General, I would like to congratulate you on the complete success of operations at Milne Bay ... but it appeared to us here as though by not acting with great speed Clowes was liable to have missed the opportunity of dealing completely with the enemy and thus laying himself open to destruction if after securing a footing, the enemy was able to reinforce their first landing party strongly".
- Blamey subsequently sacked Rowell and shortly after, Rowell's friend Clowes.
- Clowes returned to Australia in 1943 and held various postings until the end of the war.
- Clowes retired from the Army with the rank of lieutenant general in June 1949. His chief staff officer at Milne Bay, Colonel Fred Chilton, said he was
- ... a fine commander and a steady man. He was a cautious man ... this was reflected in his dispositions [of troops]. The only thing I think he can be criticised for, is his lack of public relations – for not sending back phoney reports about what a wonderful job he was doing ... his reports were confined to purely military operations and didn't give the boys back in Melbourne what they wanted. At that stage most of them didn't have a clue about fighting battles anyway...
- He was known as "Silent" Cyril. Australian historian Peter Brune explained why;
  - "Clowes was a man of few words to those he knew and even less to those he did not."
- Clowes died on 19 May 1968



MAJOR-GENERAL CYRIL CLOWES  
COMMANDER OF THE AUSTRALIAN  
FORCES IN THE MILNE BAY AREA.

# Lt Gen Cyril Clowes

- When considering Clowes' decisions and the MacArthur/Blamey criticism it is worth remembering that Vandegrift (photo) on Guadalcanal repeatedly withdrew his attacking units to reinforce his perimeter because the Japanese were free to land reinforcements anywhere on the island and he might have been caught with part of his force too far away to defend against the next attack on the airfield.

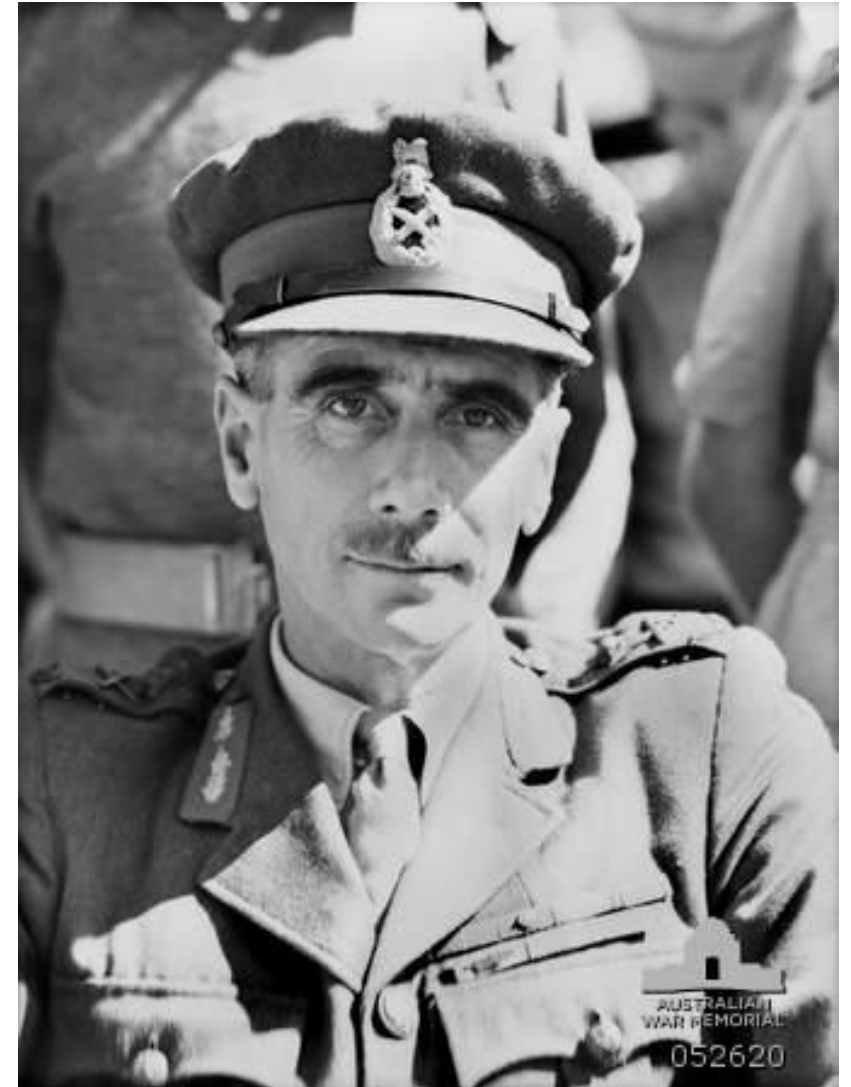
Photo # USMC 51822 Maj.Gen. Alexander A. Vandegrift, USMC, in his command tent on Guadalcanal, 1942





# Major General George Vasey

- A professional soldier, Vasey graduated from Royal Military College, Duntroon in 1915 and served on the Western Front with the AIF initially in the artillery later as Brigade Major of the 11<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, which was involved in heavy fighting at Messines and Passchendaele. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Order and twice Mentioned in Despatches the citation referred to gallantry in action as well as diligence on the staff.
- For nearly twenty years, Vasey remained in the rank of major, serving on staff posts in Australia and with the Indian Army.
- In March 1941, Vasey took command of 19th Infantry Brigade, which he led in the Battle of Greece and Battle of Crete.
- Returning to Australia in 1942, Vasey was promoted to major general and became Deputy Chief of the General Staff.

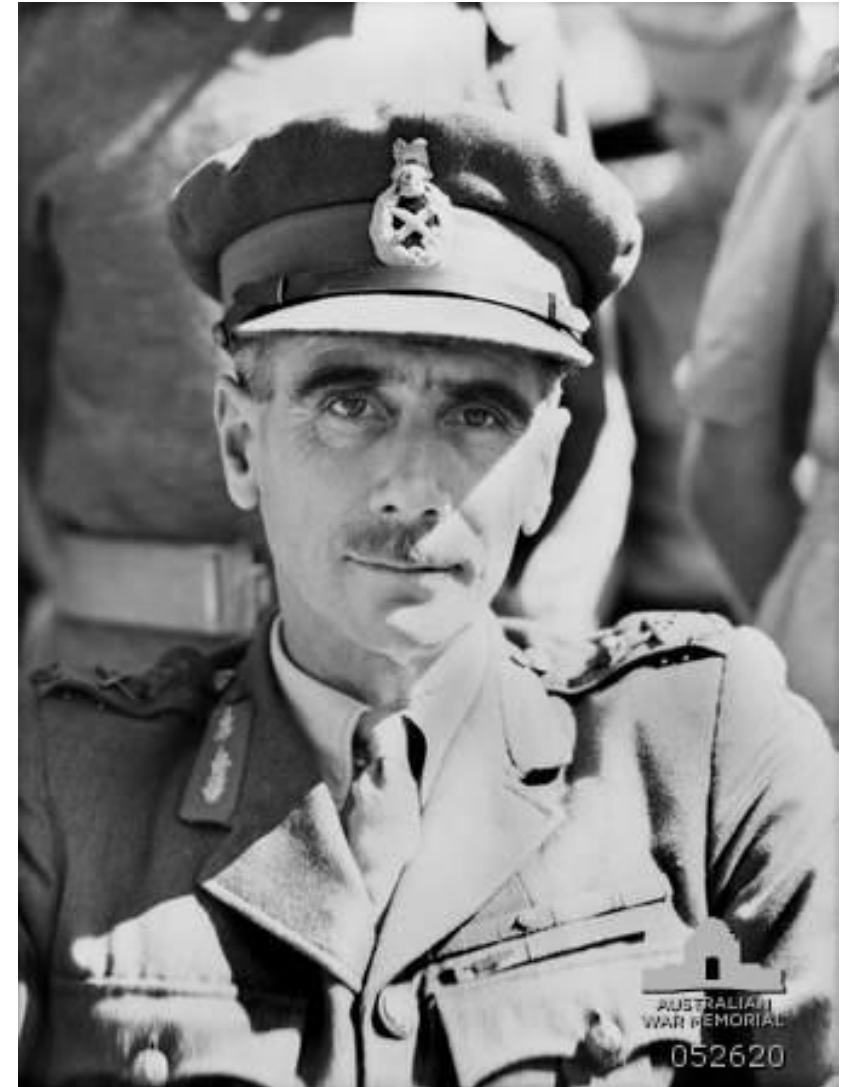


# 21 April

- **Sea**
- On 21 April CinCPac ordered the Lexington taskforce to rendezvous on 1 May with Yorktown about 250 miles north west of New Caledonia.
- **Land**
- During 21st-24th April Generals Vasey and Brett were at Port Moresby.
- A decision was reached to form a guerrilla group to be known as Kanga Force.
  - This was to consist of,
  - the N.G.V.R.,
  - Lieutenant Howard's platoon which was now in the Wau area,
  - the 2/5th Independent Company, and
  - a mortar platoon which was to be raised from units in Port Moresby.
- Immediately Howard's platoon and the N.G.V.R. were to reconnoitre the Lae and Salamaua areas and the Markham Valley and carry out restricted offensive action there.
- They were not to take any action that would "prejudice the main role of Kanga Force, which will be the attack of Lae and of Salamaua, making the most use of the factor of surprise."

# Major General George Vasey

- In September 1942, he assumed command of the 7th Division, fighting the Japanese in the Kokoda Track campaign and the Battle of Buna-Gona.
- In 1943, he embarked on his second campaign in New Guinea, leading the 7th Division in the Landing at Nadzab and the subsequent Finisterre Range campaign.
- In June 1944, he became seriously ill with malaria and acute peripheral neuropathy to the extent that he was evacuated to Australia, and for a time was not expected to live.
- By early 1945 he had recovered sufficiently to be appointed to command the 6th Division then in action in the Aitape-Wewak campaign.
- While flying to assume this new command during a cyclone, the RAAF Lockheed Hudson he was travelling in crashed into the sea about 400 metres out from Machans Beach, just north of the mouth of the Barron River, a mile short of the Cairns Airport, killing all on board.



# General Merrill Twining USMC

- A few times in our story we have caught a glimpse of a couple of the Twining brothers.

# 17 July - Air

- On 17 July an Army B-17 from Port Moresby carrying Lieutenant Colonel Merrill Twining, assistant operations officer of the 1st Marine Division, and Major William McKean, on the staff of Transport Squadron 26, conducted a reconnaissance of the WATCHTOWER landing areas.
- They assured General Vandegrift that the Lunga beaches appeared suitable for landing.
- SWP
- 5 B-17's bomb harbor at Rabaul.
- Aleutians
- 3 B-17's and 7 B-24's fly weather, bombing and photo missions. Shipping is bombed- North and South Heads of Kiska are photographed. Fighters down 1 B-17.

# 21 August - Guadalcanal

- When the tanks returned to the west bank, Vandegrift wrote, “the rear of the tanks looked like meat grinders.”
- The action cost the Marines 34 dead and 75 wounded.
- A search of the battlefield gleaned the division ten heavy and 20 light machine guns, 20 grenade throwers, 700 rifles, 20 pistols, numerous swords and grenades and three 70mm guns.
- A number of Japanese chose to use their last breath to take an American with them. One Japanese sergeant startled Lt Cols Twining, Pollock and Cresswell by discharging an automatic pistol in their faces-without effect-and then blowing off the top of his own head.
- Vandegrift wrote to Holcomb, the Commandant of the Corps, a few days later:
  - “General, I have never heard or read of this kind of fighting. These people refuse to surrender. The wounded wait until men come up to examine them . . . and blow themselves and the other fellow to pieces with a hand grenade.
- Vandegrift awarded Sergeant Major Vouza the silver star and conferred a rarer honour by appointing him a Sergeant Major in the United States Marine Corps.



Vouza on Guadalcanal in August 1942

# 13 January - Air

- On 13th January 1943 the Thirteenth Air Force came into being to command all US Army Airforces in the South Pacific. It comprised:
  - Nos. 11 and 5 Heavy Bombardment Groups each of four squadrons of Fortresses;
  - Nos. 69 and 70 Medium Bomber Squadrons (Marauders);
  - No. 347 Fighter Group (2 squadrons of Airacobras, 1 of Kittyhawks and 1 of Lightnings);
  - No. 12 Fighter Squadron (Airacobras); No. 44 Fighter Squadron (Kittyhawks);
  - No. 13 Troop Carrier Squadron (Dakotas).
- **Brig Gen Nathan Twining** was appointed to command.



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

# 25 January – Sea

- On night 24/25/1 two PT boats attacked four enemy barges south of Kumusi River. Two barges were sunk and the other two beached. Our boats suffered no damage.
- On 25<sup>th</sup> January 1943, 12 days after he took command of the 13<sup>th</sup> Air Force, a plane carrying Brig. Gen. Twining and 14 others went missing en route from Guadalcanal to Espiritu Santo.





# 1 February - Sea

- Kuru rescued the survivors of the Patricia Cam at 8 p.m. on the 29th and landed them at Darwin at 10 a.m. on 1st February. The Reverend Leonard Kentish had been abducted by the Japanese floatplane, which bombed the ship.
- On 1<sup>st</sup> February 1943 after an extensive air and sea search the U.S. Navy found and rescued Brig. Gen. Twining, the 13th Air Force Commander, and 14 others near the New Hebrides. They had spent six days in life rafts since their ditching.



# General Merrill Twining USMC

- In 1994 General Merrill Twining, being the senior survivor of the battle for Guadalcanal, published a slim volume of his memories of the battle.
- Ostensibly this was to repair some inadequacies in the official accounts of the battle.
- Actually it appears to be an opportunity to bad mouth some of his superior officers, now that death had stripped them of the protection of the American libel laws.



# General Merrill Twining USMC

- He criticised Frank Jack Fletcher for his decision to withdraw the carriers after forty eight hours and excoriated him for the way he conducted the pre invasion conference and subsequent decision making.
- He criticised Ghormley for defeatism, for his feeble support of the operation and for his “flagrant evasion of his plain duty to be present at and conduct the Saratoga conference in person.”
- He produced anecdotes indicating that at times Vandegrift’s decision making had become irrational.
- He reported that General Barrett, commanding 1 Marine Amphibious Corps (1MAC), had allowed his humanitarian instincts to prevail over “every dictate of a dire military necessity.” When Halsey intervened to get some action, Barrett returned to his quarters in Noumea, where a few hours later he was found lying in the courtyard dead of injuries suffered in a fall from a second story window.
- And finally he introduced General Krueger, commander of the sixth army, into his narrative only so that he could describe him as “probably the most unpleasant man I have ever known.”
- Around all of that is a lot of detail about the operations from a man who had been centrally involved in controlling the operations on Guadalcanal.

# Gen Merrill Twining USMC

- Twining provided a brief biography in the preface to his book. It gives some background of a set, possibly a small subset, of American soldiers.
- “I was born in Wisconsin and grew up in Oregon where I learned to hunt, fish and shoot in company with my five older brothers.
- Our childhood was greatly influenced by Grandfather Twining, an old soldier who had fought throughout what he always referred to as the “War of the Great Rebellion” and who told us how our family had served in all the nation’s wars, beginning with the Plymouth Colonies War against the Narragansett Indians in 1645.
- In time each of us brothers served in his own war, four of us in two wars.
- One became Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of staff.”
- Merrill Twining was retired from the Corps with a fourth star.



Interior of sandbagged command post shelter—nerve center of Guadalcanal—and known as “Impact Center.” (Left to right) Sgt. Bob Brant, Maj. Bill Buse (on phone), Col. Bill Twining, and Capt. Ray Schwenke. Fifth member of operations section is Sgt. Dick Kuhn.

- Thanks for your attention.
- **I am not here next week.**