



WIKIPEDIA
The Free Encyclopedia

Main page
Contents
Featured content
Current events
Random article
Donate to Wikipedia
Wikimedia Shop

Interaction

Help
About Wikipedia
Community portal
Recent changes
Contact page

Tools

What links here
Related changes
Upload file
Special pages
Permanent link
Page information
Wikidata item
Cite this page

Print/export

Create a book
Download as PDF
Printable version

Languages ⚙

Čeština
Español
Français
Italiano
עברית
日本語
Português
Русский
Slovenčina
Українська
中文

Edit links

Article Talk

Read Edit View history

Search 🔍

Bougainville Campaign

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Coordinates: 6°8′S 155°18′E﻿ / ﻿

The **Bougainville campaign** (**Operation Cherry Blossom**) was fought by the **Allies** in the South Pacific during **World War II** to regain control of the island of **Bougainville** from the **Japanese** forces who **had occupied it** in 1942. During their occupation the Japanese constructed **naval** aircraft bases in the north, east, and south of the island; but none in the west. They developed a naval anchorage at Tonolei Harbor near **Buin**, their largest base, on the southern coastal plain of Bougainville. On the nearby **Treasury** and **Shortland Islands** they built airfields, naval bases and anchorages. These bases helped protect **Rabaul**, the major Japanese garrison and naval base in Papua New Guinea, while allowing continued expansion to the south-east, down the Solomon Islands chain, to Guadalcanal.

The Allied campaign, which had two distinct phases, began on 1 November 1943 and ended on 21 August 1945, with the surrender of the Japanese.

Before the war, Bougainville had been administered as part of the Australian **Territory of New Guinea**, even though, geographically, Bougainville is part of the **Solomon Islands** chain. The United Kingdom and Germany had traded it for another islands territory which became British rather than German. As a result, the campaign is referred to as part of both the **New Guinea** and the **Solomon Islands campaigns**.

Contents [hide]

- Japanese occupation
- Allied offensives
 - First phase: November 1943 – November 1944
 - Second phase: November 1944 – August 1945
- Namesake
- Notes
- References
- Further reading

Japanese occupation [edit]

In March–April 1942, the Japanese **landed on Bougainville** as part of their advance into the South Pacific. At the time, there was only a small Australian garrison on the island which consisted of about 20 soldiers from the **1st Independent Company** and some **coastwatchers**. Shortly after the Japanese arrived, the bulk of the Australian force was evacuated by the Allies, although some of the coastwatchers remained behind to provide intelligence.^[6] Once secured, the Japanese began constructing a number of airfields across the island.^[7] The main airfields were on Buka Island, the **Bonis Peninsula** in the north, at Kahili and Kara, in the south, and Kieta on the east coast,^[7] while a naval anchorage was constructed at Tonolei Harbor near Buin on the southern coastal plain, along with anchorages on the Shortland Islands group.^[8]

The airfield at Kahili was known by the Japanese as Buin Airfield,^[9] and to its south was an airfield on **Ballale Island** in the Shortland Islands. These bases allowed the Japanese to conduct operations in the southern Solomon Islands and to attack the Allied **lines of communication** between the United States, Australia and the Southwest Pacific Area.^[7]

Allied offensives [edit]

First phase: November 1943 – November 1944 [edit]

Following the American success at **Guadalcanal** in February 1943, Allied forces

Bougainville campaign (1943–45)

Part of the **Pacific Theatre of World War II**



United States Army soldiers hunt Japanese infiltrators on Bougainville in March 1944.

Date	1 November 1943 – 21 August 1945
Location	6°8′S 155°18′E﻿ / ﻿ Bougainville, Territory of New Guinea (geographically part of the Solomon Islands)
Result	Allied victory

Belligerents

 United States	 Empire of Japan
 Australia	
 New Zealand	
 Colony of Fiji	

Commanders and leaders

 Roy Geiger	 Harukichi
 Theodore Wilkinson	 Hyakutake
 Oscar Griswold	 Masatane Kanda
 Stanley Savige	

Strength

96,000 American soldiers	45,000–65,000 troops, ^[3]
30,000 Australian soldiers ^[1]	154 aircraft ^[2]
728 aircraft ^[2]	

Casualties and losses

USA	18,500–21,500 dead ^[5] [Note 1]
Australia	
516 dead ^[4]	

v · t · e [show]

Bougainville Campaign

v · t · e [show]

Solomon Islands campaign

v · t · e [show]

New Guinea campaign



advanced up the Solomon Island chain and in late 1943 commenced the Bougainville campaign as part of the larger [Operation Cartwheel](#).^[10] At the opening of the Allied offensives, estimates of Japanese strength on Bougainville varied widely, ranging between 45,000 to 65,000 Army, Navy, and labour personnel.^{[3][Note 2]}

The first phase of Allied operations to retake Bougainville (Operation Cherry Blossom)^[11] from the [Japanese 17th Army](#) began with [landings at Cape Torokina](#) by the [U.S. Marine 3rd Division, I Marine Amphibious Corps](#), on 1 November 1943.^[7] The Allies established a beachhead around Cape Torokina for the construction of an [airfield](#) within fighter range of Rabaul. Allied forces did not plan at this time to try to capture the entire island of Bougainville from Japanese forces. An attempt by the [Imperial Japanese Navy](#) to attack the U.S. landing forces was defeated by the [U.S. Navy](#) in the [Battle of Empress Augusta Bay](#), on 1–2 November.^[12] A subsequent attempt by Japanese land forces to attack the Allied beachhead was defeated in the [Battle of Koromokina Lagoon](#).^[13]

From 6–19 November 1943 the [I Marine Amphibious Corps](#) landed the remaining regiment of the 3rd Marine Division and the U.S. Army's [37th Infantry Division](#) to expand the beachhead.^[14] Protracted and often bitter [jungle warfare](#) followed, with many casualties resulting from [malaria](#) and other tropical diseases. Except for patrol skirmishes, all of the major combat to expand the beachhead occurred in the Marine sector, with the following battles taking place during this time: [Koiari Raid](#), [Piva Trail](#), [Coconut Grove](#) and [Piva Forks](#).^[15] Among those killed was Lieutenant Stanley P. Wright, whose poem "A Marine to His Girl" appeared in [Eleanor Roosevelt's](#) column *My Day* in January 1944.^[16]

In November and December the Japanese emplaced [field artillery](#) on the high ground around the beachhead, concentrated in a group of hills along the Torokina River overlooking the eastern perimeter. They shelled the beachhead, targeting the airstrips and the supply dumps.^[17] The 3rd Marine Division extended its lines to include the hills in a series of operations that lasted from 9–27 December. One hill, "Hellzapoppin Ridge", was a natural fortress 300 feet (91 m) long, with sharp slopes and a narrow crest that overlooked much of the beachhead.^[18] The Japanese constructed extensive positions on the reverse slopes using natural and artificial camouflage. The [21st Marines](#) attacked [Hellzapoppin Ridge](#) but were driven off on 12 December. Several air strikes missed the narrow ridge completely.^[19] Finally, coordinated air, artillery, and infantry attacks resulted in the capture of Hellzapoppin Ridge on 18 December.^[20] In the days that followed, the 21st Marines were also involved in fighting around Hill 600A, which was captured by 24 December 1943.^[21]

On 15 December 1943, the I Marine Amphibious Corps was replaced by the Army's [XIV Corps](#)^[7] and on 28 December, the 3rd Marine Division by the [Americal Division](#). The XIV Corps defended the beachhead against a major Japanese [counterattack](#) from 9–17 March 1944, at Hill 700 and Cannon Hill, which were defended by the Ohio 37th Infantry Division, and Hill 260, which was defended by the Americal Division. The counterattack was defeated with heavy losses for the Japanese army, which then withdrew the majority of its force into the deep interior and to the north and south ends of Bougainville.^[22]

On 5 April 1944, the Americal Division's [132nd Infantry Regiment](#), after establishing patrol sweeps along Empress Augusta Bay, successfully launched an attack to capture the Japanese-held village of Mavavia. Two days later, while continuing a sweep for enemy forces, the Regiment encountered prepared enemy defences, where they destroyed about 20 Japanese pillboxes using [pole charges](#) and [bazookas](#). Later, the 132nd, together with elements of the Fiji Defence Force, was tasked with securing the heights west of Saua River. The regiment and its allies captured Hills 155, 165, 500, and 501 in fierce fighting that lasted until 18 April, when the last of the Japanese defenders were killed or driven off.^[23]

The Japanese, isolated and cut off from outside assistance, primarily concentrated on survival, including the development of farms throughout the island.^[22] The Americans were reinforced by the [93rd Infantry Division](#),^[24] the first African American infantry unit to see action in World War II.^[25] The Allies concentrated on constructing multiple airfields in the beachhead, from which they conducted fighter and bomber operations over [Rabaul](#), [Kavieng](#) and other Japanese-held bases in the South Pacific area. Air support over Bougainville was provided largely by the [Royal New Zealand Air Force](#), the US Marine Corps aviation squadrons, and the [United States Army Air Forces](#), under the control of [Air Command, Solomons](#) (AIRSOLS).^[26]

Australian intelligence officers, after studying records, estimated that 8,200 Japanese troops were killed in combat during the American phase of operations, and 16,600 more died of disease or malnutrition.^[27]

Hill 260 being shelled by [Americal Division](#) artillery, on 19 March 1944



A [Fijian](#) medical orderly administers an emergency plasma transfusion during heavy fighting on Bougainville.



5 April 1945: The view forward of Australian positions on [Slater's Knoll](#), Bougainville; the soldier in the foreground is aiming an [Owen submachinegun](#).



Some key locations in the campaign.

Second phase: November 1944 – August 1945 [[edit](#)]

Between October and December 1944, the U.S. ground forces handed over operations on the island to the main body of the Australian **II Corps**, a **Militia** formation.^[28] The **Australian 3rd Division** and the **11th Brigade** were on Bougainville, reinforced by the **Fiji Infantry Regiment**. The **23rd Brigade** garrisoned neighbouring islands.^[29] The Australians determined that Japanese forces on Bougainville, now numbering approximately 40,000, still had approximately 20 percent of their personnel in forward positions and that although understrength, were organized in combat-capable formations, including the 38th Independent Mixed Brigade and the 6th Division. The Australian II Corps adopted an aggressive posture to overwhelm and reduce or destroy these forces.^[27]

So began the second phase of the Allied campaign. Opening combat as early as 29 November and the offensive on 30 December, three separate drives developed: in the north, it was planned that Japanese forces would be forced into the narrow Bonis Peninsula and contained; in the centre the **seizure of Pearl Ridge** would give the Australians control of the east–west thoroughfares and protection against further counterattacks, while also opening the way for a drive to the east coast; and the main campaign in the south, where the bulk of the Japanese forces were concentrated at Buin.^[30]

Following the capture of Pearl Ridge in the central sector in December 1944, the focus of the Australian campaign moved to the northern and southern sectors, with operations in the central sector being confined to patrols along the Numa Numa trail.^[31] In the north the Australians advanced along the coast towards the Genga River while sending patrols inland to flush the Japanese out of the high ground.^[32] After capturing **Tsimba Ridge** in February 1945 they continued to advance on Ratsua, forcing the Japanese into the Bonis Peninsula. Coming up against formidable defences, however, an attempt was made to outflank the Japanese positions by **landing an amphibious force at Porton Plantation** in June, however, this failed and as a result it was decided to suspend the drive into the Bonis Peninsula and instead contain the Japanese along the **Ratsua front**^[33] while resources were diverted to the southern sector for the drive towards Buin. In the southern sector, after a brief but costly counterattack by the Japanese at **Slater's Knoll**, the Australians had managed to gain the upper hand and advanced steadily to the south, crossing the **Hongorai**,^[34] Hari and Mobai Rivers. However, shortly after reaching the Mivo River their advance came to a halt as torrential rain and flooding washed away many of the bridges and roads upon which the Australian line of communications was dependent. This rendered large scale infantry operations impossible for almost a month and it was not until late July and into early August that the Australians were able to resume patrolling across the Mivo River.^[35]

Combat operations on Bougainville ended with the surrender of Japanese forces on Bougainville on 21 August 1945. The Empire surrendered in **Tokyo Bay** on 2 September 1945. The last phase of the campaign saw 516 Australians killed and another 1,572 wounded. 8,500 Japanese were killed at the same time,^[36] while disease and malnutrition killed another 9,800 and some 23,500 troops and labourers surrendered at the end of the war.^[27]

Three **Victoria Crosses** were awarded during the campaign, one to a Fijian and two to Australians. Corporal **Sefanaia Sukanaivalu** of Fiji received the award **posthumously** for his bravery at Mawaraka on 23 June 1944.^[37] Corporal **Reg Rattey** received the award for his actions during the fighting around Slater's Knoll on 22 March 1945, while Private **Frank Partridge** earned his in one of the final actions of the campaign on 24 July 1945 during fighting along the Ratsua front.^{[38][39]} Partridge was the only member of the Militia to receive the VC which was the last of the war to an Australian.^[40]

Namesake [[edit](#)]

The U.S. Navy **escort carrier** *USS **Bougainville** (CVE-100)*, in **commission** from 1944 to 1946, was named for the Bougainville campaign.^[41]

Notes [[edit](#)]

Footnotes

- ↑ Figure includes deaths from all causes: combat, disease, starvation, and accident. The Australians counted 21,000 to 23,500 Japanese survivors on Bougainville upon the surrender of Japanese forces at the end of World War II. If Gailey's and Long's figure of 65,000 Japanese troops originally on Bougainville is accurate, then the Japanese casualty figures would be far higher. Long's figures are quoted in the narrative, totalling 16,700 combat deaths and 26,400 deaths from disease and malnutrition.^[5]
- ↑ Rottman provides the figure of 45,000 while Gailey and Long state that there were 65,000 total Japanese personnel in and around Bougainville. Long's estimate is that of contemporary Australian intelligence officers, which he says was verified at the end of the war.^[3]

Citations

- | | | | | | |
|----|---|-----|---|-----|--|
| 1. | ↑ Shaw 1963, p. 246; Lofgren 1993, p. 27; Gailey 1991, p. 191. | 11. | ↑ Camp 2006, p. 110. | 29. | ↑ Keogh 1965, p. 416. |
| 2. | ↑ ^a ^b Shaw 1963, pp. 185–86. | 12. | ↑ Rentz 1946, pp. 38–39. | 30. | ↑ Johnston 2007, pp. 30–31. |
| | | 13. | ↑ Rentz 1946, pp. 40–45. | 31. | ↑ Keogh 1965, p. 421. |

3. [^] ^a ^b ^c Rottman 2005, pp. 70–72; Gailey, 1991, p. 211 and Long 1963, pp. 102–103.
4. [^] Shaw 1963, p. 281, Lofgren 1993, p. 32, and Gailey 1991, p. 210.
5. [^] ^a ^b Rottman 2005, pp. 70–72; Gailey 1991, p. 211 and Long 1963, pp. 102–103.
6. [^] Australian Department of Veteran's Affairs. "In the Shadows: Bougainville" [^]. Retrieved 20 October 2006.
7. [^] ^a ^b ^c ^d ^e Keogh 1965, p. 414.
8. [^] Murray 2001, p. 169–195, Spector 1985, pp. 152–53.
9. [^] "Kahili Airfield (Buin Airfield)" [^]. Pacific Wrecks. Retrieved 7 April 2012.
10. [^] Miller 1959, p. 222.
14. [^] Rentz 1946, p. 53.
15. [^] Rentz 1946, pp. 46–59.
16. [^] Roosevelt, 1944 [^]
17. [^] Rentz 1946, p. 73–74.
18. [^] Rentz 1946, pp. 83–84.
19. [^] Rentz 1946, p. 84.
20. [^] Rentz 1946, pp. 84–85.
21. [^] Rentz 1946, p. 87.
22. [^] ^a ^b Keogh 1965, p. 415.
23. [^] Gailey 1991, p. 171.
24. [^] Miller 1959, Chapter XVII footnote 36.
25. [^] "African-Americans in World War II" [^]. The History Place. Retrieved 7 April 2012.
26. [^] Miller 1959, p. 232.
27. [^] ^a ^b ^c Long 1963. pp. 102–103.
28. [^] Maitland 1999, p. 108.
32. [^] Long 1963, p. 122.
33. [^] Long 1963, p. 234.
34. [^] Maitland 1999, p. 122.
35. [^] Long 1963, p. 222.
36. [^] Maitland 1999, p. 124.
37. [^] "Casualty Details: Sefanaia Sukanaivalu" [^]. Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Retrieved 26 December 2009.
38. [^] Maitland 1999, p. 121.
39. [^] Long 1963, p. 236.
40. [^] Charlton 1983, p. 170.
41. [^] "Bougainville" [^]. *Dictionary of American Fighting Ships*. Retrieved 7 April 2012.

References [[]edit[]]

- Bergerud, Eric M. (1997). *Touched with Fire: The Land War in the South Pacific*. Penguin. ISBN 0-14-024696-7.
- Camp, Dick (2006). *Leatherneck Legends: Conversations With the Marine Corps' Old Breed*. Zenith Publications. ISBN 978-0-7603-2157-7.
- Carey, John (2002). *A Marine from Boston: A First Person Story of a US Marine in World War II — Boot Camp-Samoa-Guadalcanal-Bougainville*. Authorhouse. ISBN 1-4033-6720-5.
- Chapin, John C. (1997). "Top of the Ladder: Marine Operations in the Northern Solomons" [^]. *World War II Commemorative series*. Marine Corps History and Museums Division. p. 1. Retrieved 30 August 2006.
- Charlton, Peter (1983). *The Unnecessary War: Island Campaigns of the South-West Pacific 1944–45*. South Melbourne: The MacMillan Company of Australia. ISBN 0-333-35628-4.
- Craven, Wesley Frank; James Lea Cate. "Vol. IV, The Pacific: Guadalcanal to Saipan, August 1942 to July 1944" [^]. *The Army Air Forces in World War II*. U.S. Office of Air Force History. Retrieved 20 October 2006.
- Fuqea, David C. (1997). "Bougainville: The Amphibious Assault Enters Maturity" [^]. *Naval War College Review, Winter 1997, Vol. L, No. 1*. p. 418. Retrieved 20 October 2006.^[*dead link*]
- Gailey, Harry A. (1991). *Bougainville, 1943–1945: The Forgotten Campaign*. Lexington, Kentucky, USA: University Press of Kentucky. ISBN 0-8131-9047-9.
- Hoffman, Jon T. (1995). "Bougainville" [^] (brochure). *From Makin to Bougainville: Marine Raiders in the Pacific War*. Marine Corps Historical Center. Retrieved 21 November 2006.^[*dead link*]
- James, Karl (2005). "The Final Campaigns: Bougainville 1944–1945" [^] (PhD thesis). University of Wollongong. Retrieved 12 December 2006.
- Johnston, Mark (2007). *The Australian Army in World War II*. Botley, Oxford: Osprey Publishing. ISBN 978-1-84603-123-6.
- Keogh, Eustace (1965). *South West Pacific 1941–45*. Melbourne: Grayflower Publications. OCLC 7185705 [^].
- Lofgren, Stephen J. (1993). *Northern Solomons* [^]. *The U.S. Army Campaigns of World War II (United States Army Center of Military History)*. CMH Pub 72-10. Retrieved 18 October 2006.
- Long, Gavin (1963). *Volume VII – The Final Campaigns* [^]. *Australia in the War of 1939–1945*. Canberra: Australian War Memorial. Retrieved 2 November 2006.
- Maitland, Gordon (1999). *The Second World War and its Australian Army Battle Honours*. East Roseville, New South Wales: Kangaroo Press. ISBN 0-86417-975-8.
- McGee, William L. (2002). *The Solomons Campaigns, 1942–1943: From Guadalcanal to Bougainville—Pacific War Turning Point, Volume 2 (Amphibious Operations in the South Pacific in WWII)*. BMC Publications. ISBN 0-9701678-7-3.
- Mersky, Peter B. (1993). "Time of the Aces: Marine Pilots in the Solomons, 1942–1944" [^]. *Marines in World War II Commemorative Series*. History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps. Retrieved 20 October 2006.
- Miller, John, Jr. (1959). "Cartwheel: The Reduction of Rabaul" [^]. *United States Army in World War II: The War in the Pacific*. Office of the Chief of Military History, U.S. Department of the Army. p. 418. Retrieved 20 October 2006.
- Morison, Samuel Eliot (1958). *Breaking the Bismarcks Barrier*, vol. 6 of *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II*. Castle Books. ISBN 0-7858-1307-1.
- Murray, Williamson; Allan R. Millett (2001). *A War To Be Won: Fighting the Second World War*. United States of America: Belknap Press. ISBN 0-674-00680-1.
- Odgers, George (1968). *Volume II – Air War Against Japan, 1943–1945* [^]. *Australia in the War of 1939–1945*. Canberra: Australian War Memorial. Retrieved 2 November 2006.
- Peatross, Oscar F.; John P. McCarthy and John Clayborne (editors) (1995). *Bless 'em All: The Raider Marines of World War II*. Review. ISBN 0-9652325-0-6.
- Rentz, John N. (1946). "Bougainville and the Northern Solomons" [^]. *USMC Historical Monograph*. Historical Branch, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps. Retrieved 18 October 2006.
- Roosevelt, Eleanor (27 January 1944). "My Day" [^]. United Feature Syndicate.
- Rottman, Gordon L.; Dr. Duncan Anderson (consultant editor) (2005). *Japanese Army in World War II: The South Pacific and New Guinea, 1942–43*. Oxford and New York: Osprey. ISBN 1-84176-870-7.
- Shaw, Henry I.; Douglas T. Kane (1963). "Volume II: Isolation of Rabaul" [^]. *History of U.S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II*. Retrieved 18 October 2006.
- Spector, Ronald H. (1985). *Eagle Against the Sun*. The MacMillan Wars of the United States. New York: MacMillan, Inc. ISBN 0-02-930360-5.
- United States Army Center of Military History. *Japanese Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area, Volume II – Part I* [^]. *Reports of General MacArthur*. Retrieved 8 December 2006.
- Zaloga, Steven J. (2007). *Japanese Tanks 1939–45*. Osprey. ISBN 978-1-84603-091-8.

Further reading [edit]

- James, Karl (2012). *The Hard Slog: Australians in the Bougainville Campaign, 1944–45*. Port Melbourne, Victoria: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-1-107-01732-0.
- Medcalf, Peter (2000). *War in the Shadows: Bougainville 1944–1945*. Brisbane, Queensland: University of Queensland Press. ISBN 978-0-702-23144-5.



Wikimedia Commons has media related to *[Bougainville campaign \(1943-45\)](#)*.

Categories: [Autonomous Region of Bougainville](#) | [1943 in Papua New Guinea](#) | [1944 in Papua New Guinea](#) | [1945 in Papua New Guinea](#) | [Battles and operations of World War II involving Papua New Guinea](#) | [Battles and operations of World War II involving Australia](#) | [Battles and operations of World War II involving Japan](#) | [Battles and operations of World War II involving the United States](#) | [Conflicts in 1943](#) | [Conflicts in 1944](#) | [Conflicts in 1945](#) | [Operation Cartwheel](#) | [Pacific Ocean theatre of World War II](#) | [South West Pacific theatre of World War II](#) | [United States Marine Corps in World War II](#)

This page was last modified on 20 July 2014 at 16:49.

Text is available under the [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License](#); additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the [Terms of Use](#) and [Privacy Policy](#). Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the [Wikimedia Foundation, Inc.](#), a non-profit organization.

[Privacy policy](#) [About Wikipedia](#) [Disclaimers](#) [Contact Wikipedia](#) [Developers](#) [Mobile view](#)

