

WHITE OVER GREEN

From Hawain River to Mount Tazaki



The 2nd/4th Australian Infantry Battalion in the final campaigns in New Guinea

MAJGEN THE HON PAUL BRERETON AM RFD SC
Patron, The Military History Society of New South Wales
Colonel Commandant, The Royal New South Wales Regiment



PRIVATE EDWARD KENNA VC REST AREA

Dedicated to the Memory of a Gallant Soldier



VX700330
Private Edward KENNA
2/4th Australian Infantry Battalion, A.I.F.
15th May 1945, near Wewak, New Guinea

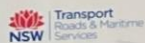
"In the South West Pacific at Wewak on 15 May 1945 during the attack near the Wirui Mission features, Private Kenna's Company had the task of capturing certain enemy positions. The only position from which observation for supporting fire could be obtained was continuously swept by enemy heavy machine-gun fire and it was not possible to bring Artillery or Mortars into action. Private Kenna's Platoon was ordered forward to deal with the enemy machine-gun post, so that the Company operation could proceed. When the attacking sections came into view of the enemy they were immediately engaged at very close range by heavy automatic fire from a position not previously disclosed. Casualties were suffered and the attackers could not move further forward. Private Kenna endeavoured to put his Bren gun into a position where he could engage the bunker but was unable to do so because of the nature of the ground. On his own initiative and without orders Private Kenna stood up in full view of the enemy less than 50 yards away and engaged the bunker, firing his Bren gun from the hip. He remained completely exposed and continued to fire at the enemy until his magazine was exhausted. Still making a target for himself, Private Kenna discarded his Bren gun and called for a rifle. Despite the intense machine gun fire, he seized the rifle and with amazing coolness killed the gunner with his first round. A second automatic opened fire on Private Kenna from a different position and another of the enemy immediately tried to move into position behind the first machine gun, but Private Kenna remained standing and killed him with his next round.

The result of Kenna's magnificent bravery in the face of concentrated fire was that the bunker was captured without further loss. The company attack proceeded to a successful conclusion. There is no doubt that the success of the company attack would have been seriously endangered and many casualties sustained, but for Private Kenna's magnificent courage and complete disregard for his own safety. His action was an outstanding example of the highest degree of bravery."

[London Gazette; 6th September 1945.]

Private KENNA was born at Hamilton, Victoria, on 6th July 1919 He died at Geelong on 8th July 2009.

THIS MEMORIAL WAS DEVELOPED BY ROADS AND MARITIME SERVICES

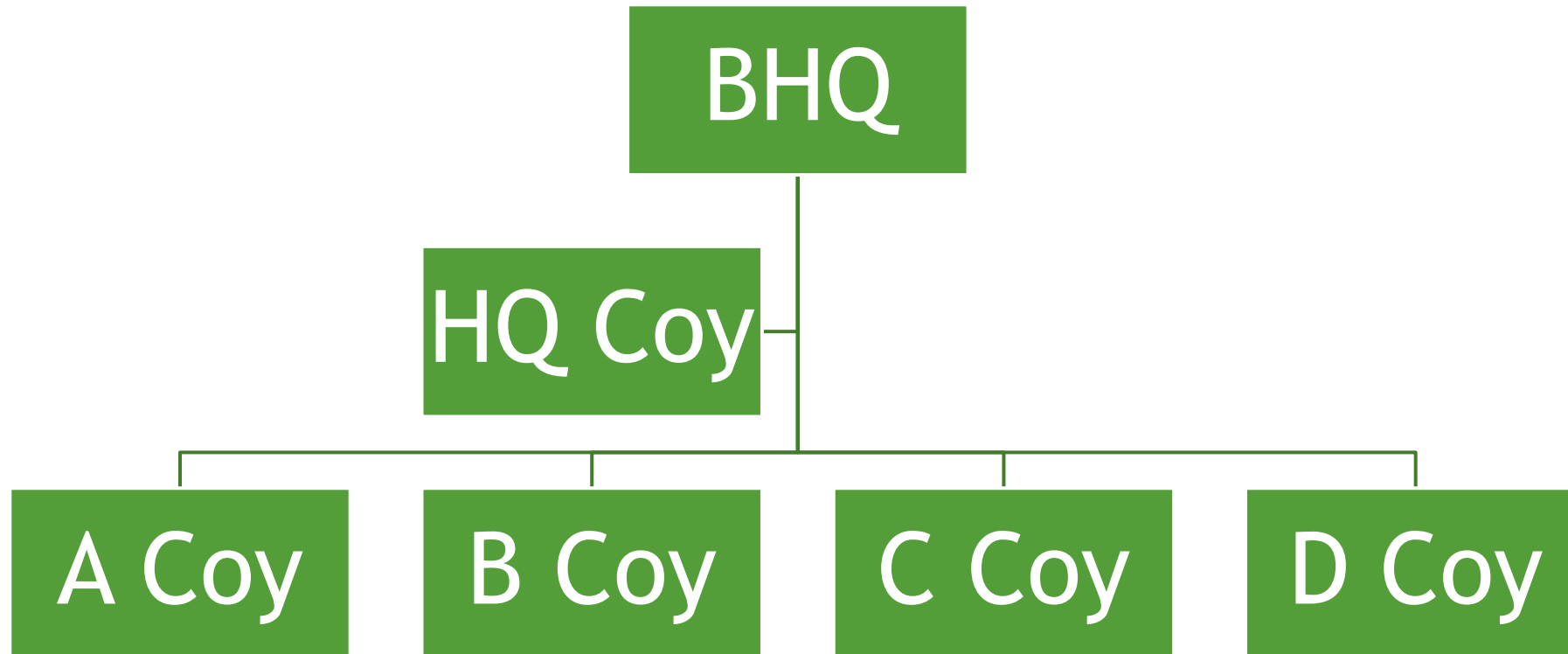


Introduction

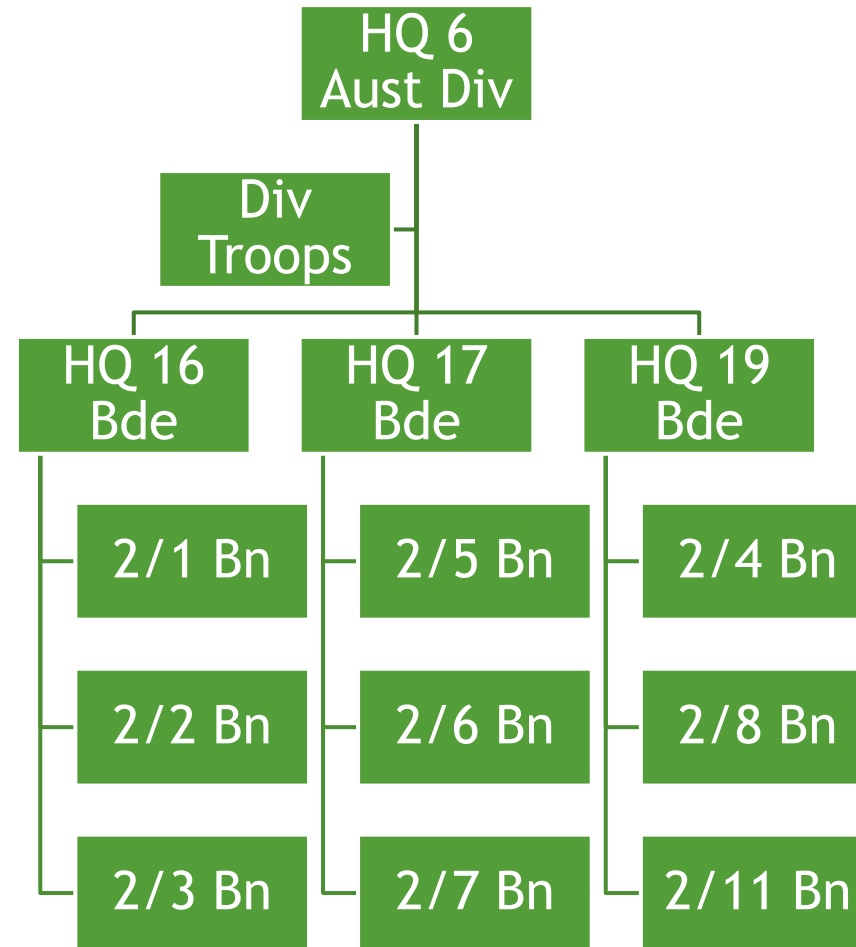
Acknowledgements

- ▶ 2/4th Australian Infantry Battalion Association, *White Over Green* (1963)
- ▶ Colonel EJ Keogh, *The South West Pacific 1941-45* (1965)
- ▶ Major General GL Maitland, *Tales of Valour from the Royal New South Wales Regiment* (1992)
- ▶ Major General GL Maitland, *The Battle History of the Royal New South Wales Regiment*, Vol 2 1939-1945 (2002)
- ▶ Mr Rob Kenna, *personal correspondence* (2025)

Formation



6th Division



The Middle East

- ▶ Capture of Tobruk (21-22 January 1941)
- ▶ Derna (27-30 January 1941)
- ▶ Soter (13 April 1941)
- ▶ Veve (10-12 April 1941)
- ▶ Brallos Pass (22-24 April 1941)
- ▶ Heraklion (20-29 May 1941)

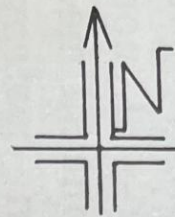
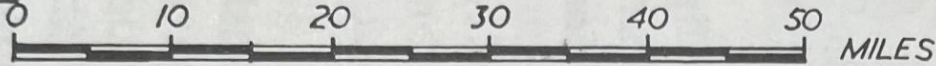
THIS PLAQUE MARKS HEADQUARTERS
OF THE ENCAMPMENT IN THE
WONDECLA DIVISIONAL AREA OF THE
6 AUST. DIV 16, 19, BRIGADES & 30 BRIGADE
(ATTACHED) 1943:

17 BRIGADE - 1944 AND ASSOCIATED TROOPS
UNVEILED BY

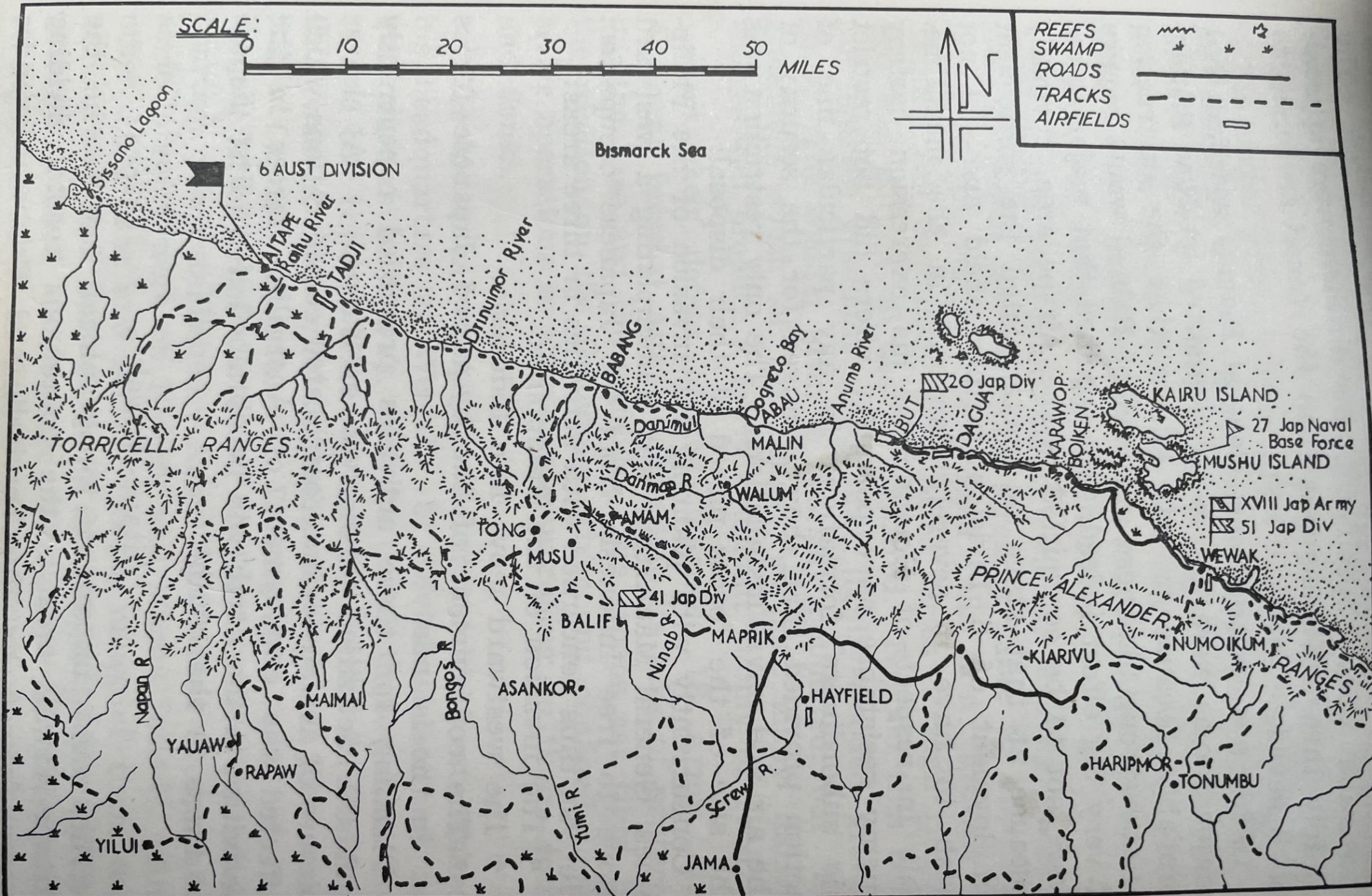
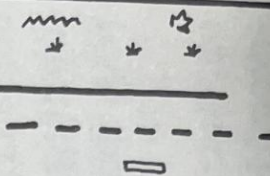
C ST. L. HOLDCROFT ESQ
CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF
THE SHIRE OF HERBERTON
AUGUST 15TH 1961 (V.P. DAY)



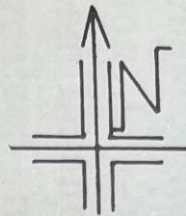
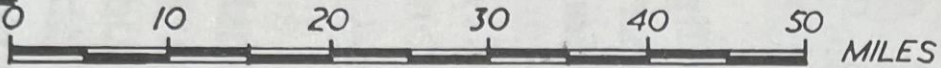
SCALE:



REEFS
SWAMP
ROADS
TRACKS
AIRFIELDS



SCALE:



REEFS

SWAMP

ROADS

TRACKS

AIRFIELDS



Bismarck Sea

6 AUST DIVISION

Sissano Lagoon

ATAPE
Bahu River

TADJI

Drinunor River

BABANG

Dagreto Bay

Anumb River

20 Jap Div

KARAWOP

BOIKEN

KAIRU ISLAND

27 Jap Naval
Base Force

MUSHU ISLAND

XVIII Jap Army

51 Jap Div

WEWAK

PRINCE ALEXANDER

KIARIVU

NUMOIKUM

RANGES

HARIPMOR

TONUMBU

HAYFIELD

MAPRIK

ASANKOR

BALIF

41 Jap Div

Danma R

WALUM

MALIN

Danimul

PAMAM

TONG

MUSU

MAIMAI

YAUAW

RAPAW

YILUI

JAMA

Yumi R

Serew R

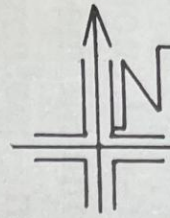
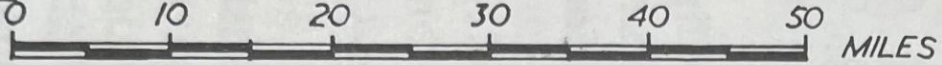
Bongos R

Napan R

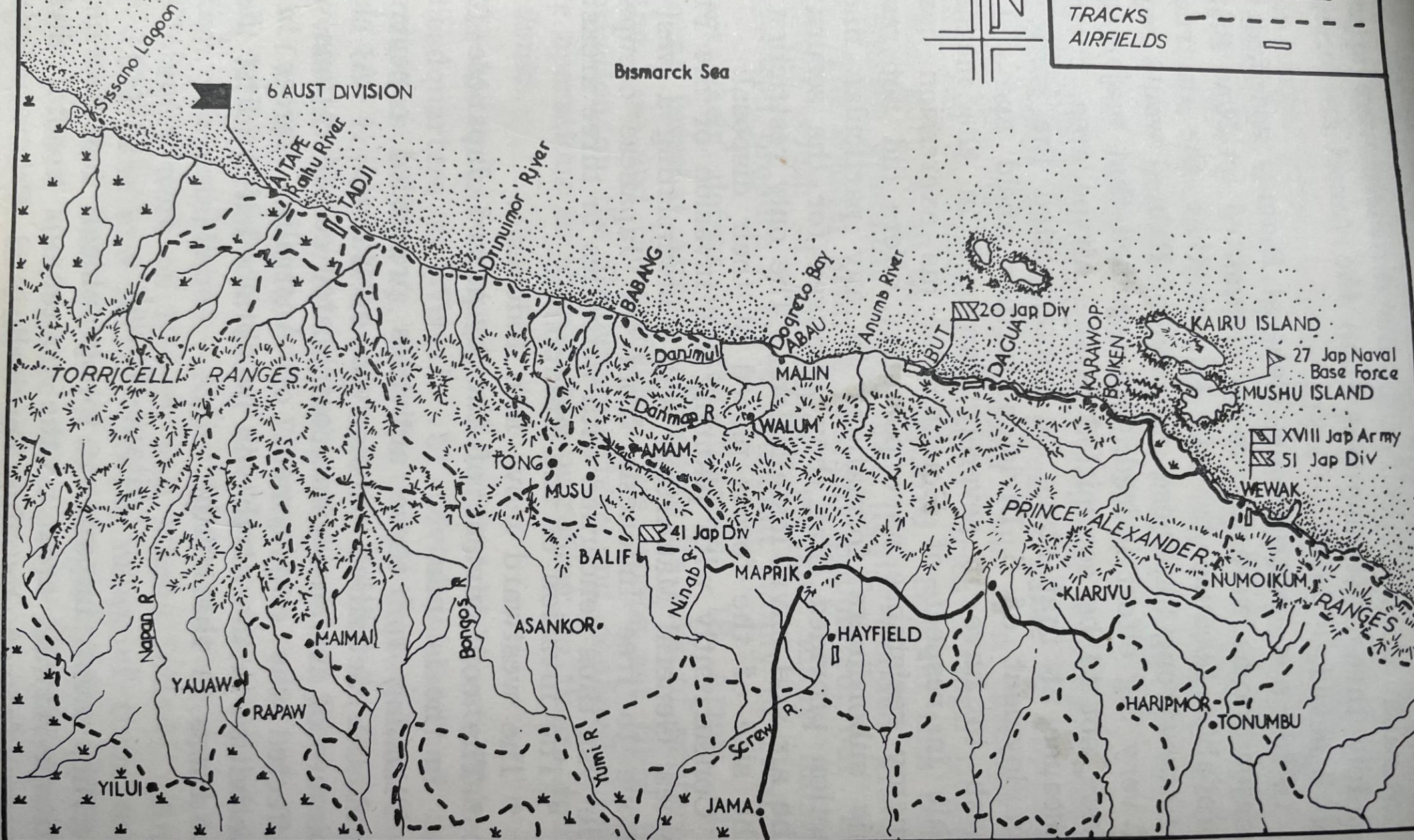
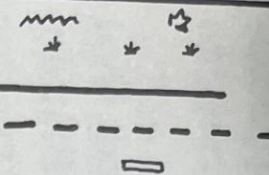
TORRICELLI RANGES



SCALE:

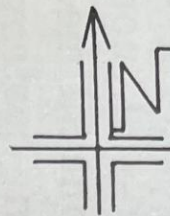


REEFS
SWAMP
ROADS
TRACKS
AIRFIELDS

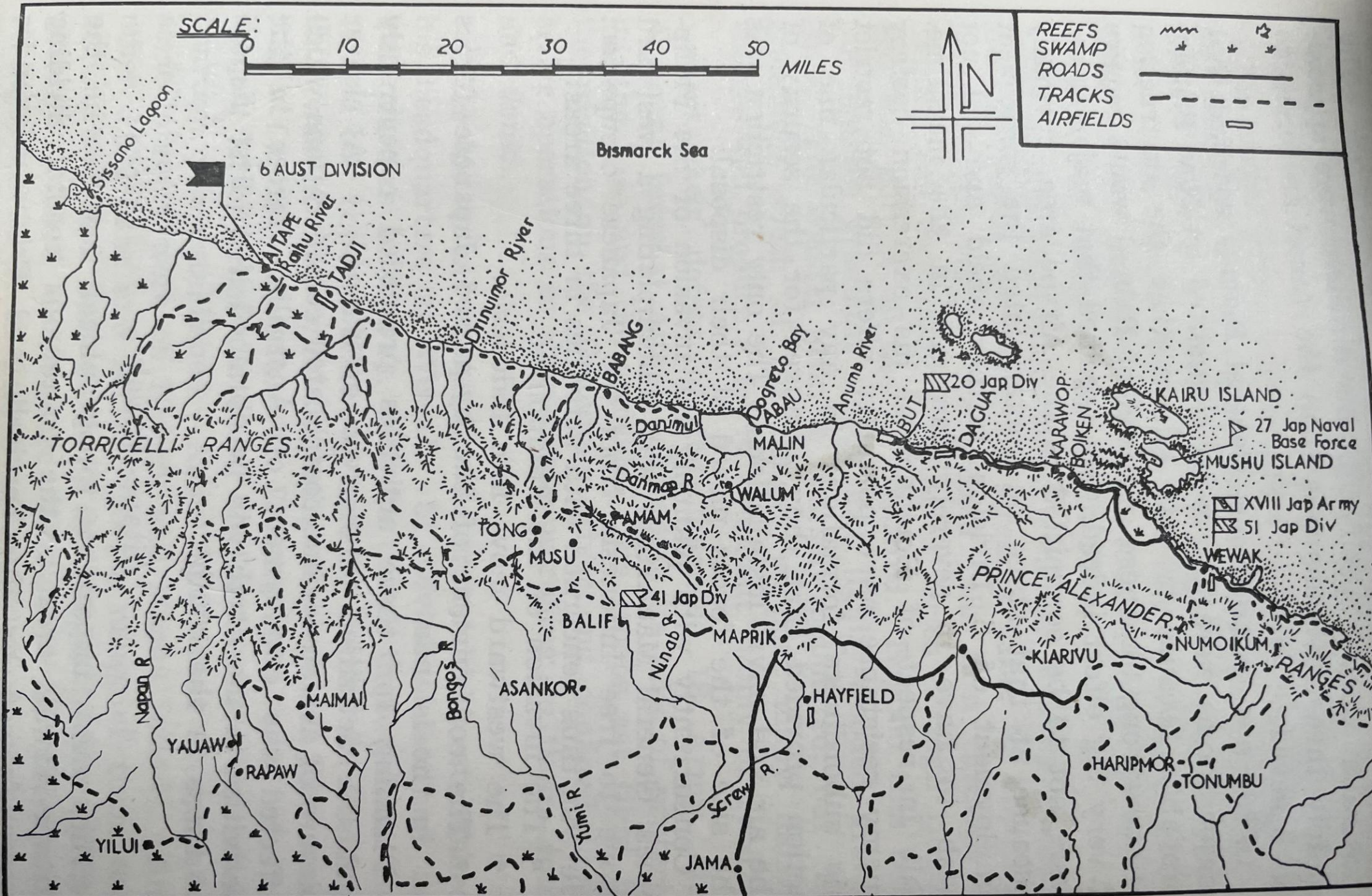
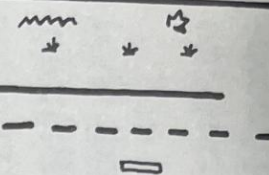


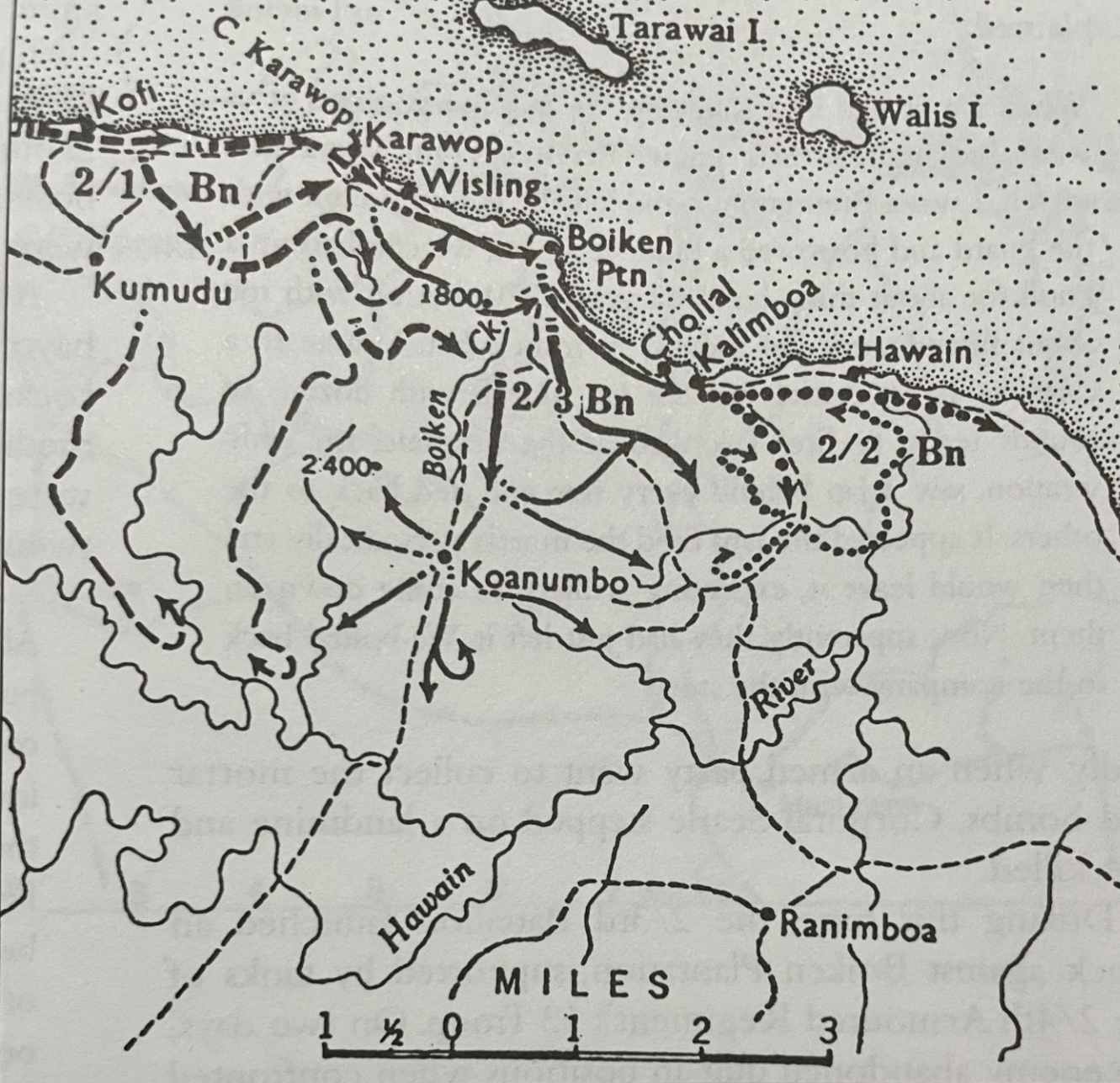
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0 10 20 30 40 50 MILES

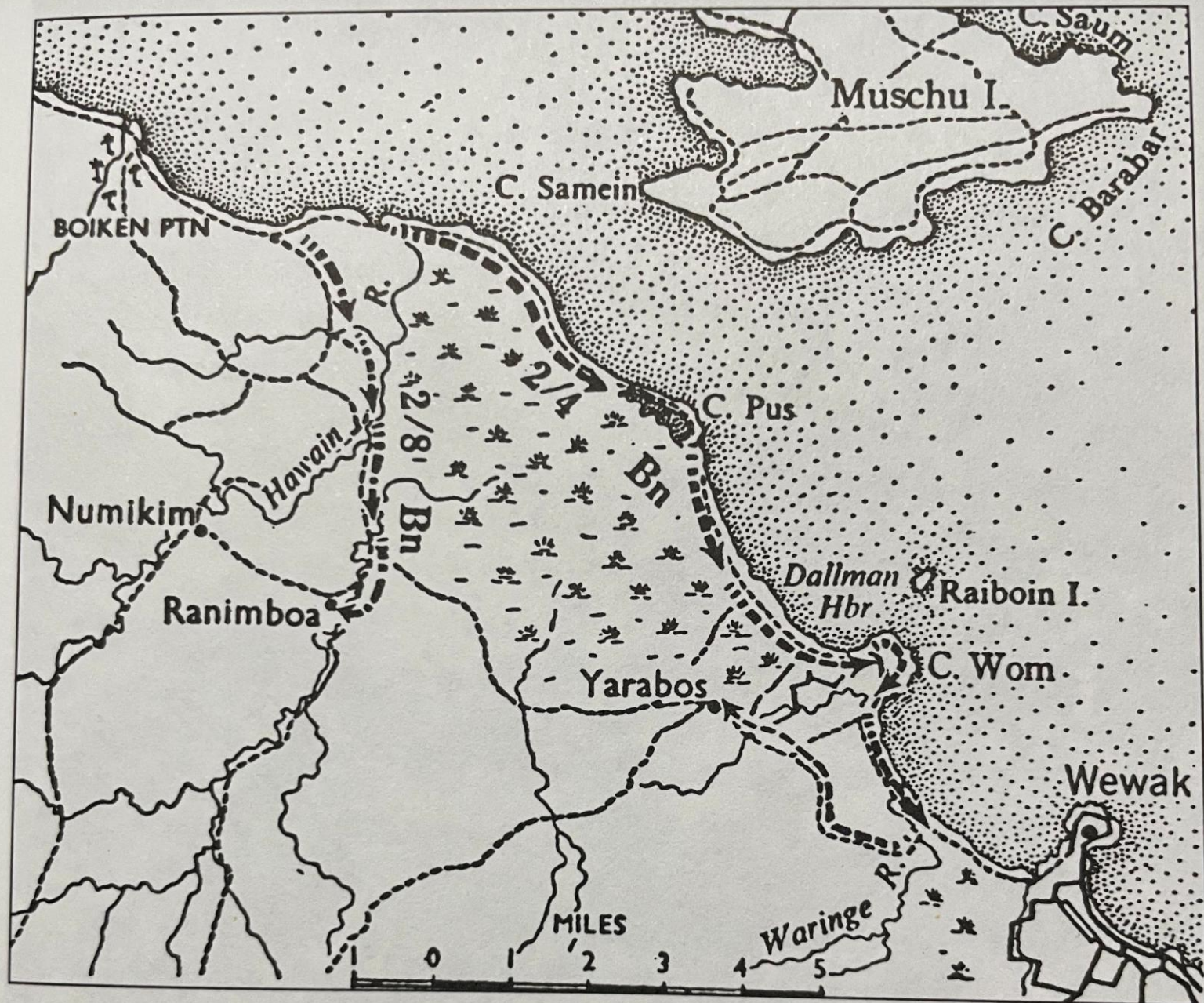


REEFS
SWAMP
ROADS
TRACKS
AIRFIELDS





Advance to Hawain River 7 - 17 April 1945



Hawain River to
Waringe River
2 - 4 May 1945

The Boiken to Wewak area
AWM







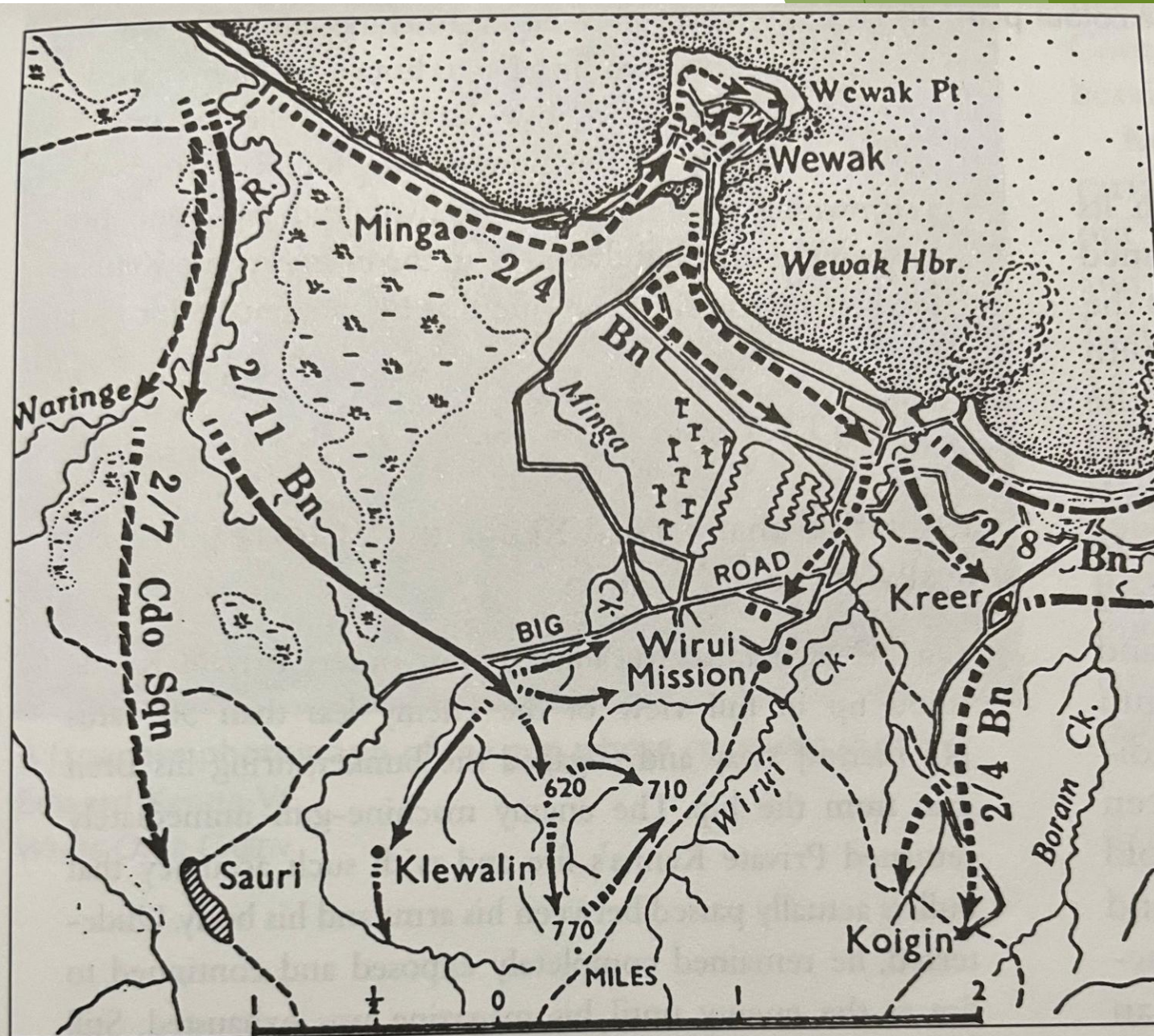
Lieutenant Colonel Cox giving his orders for the Wewak attack, using a model built by the 2/4th's Intelligence Section

WHITE OVER GREEN

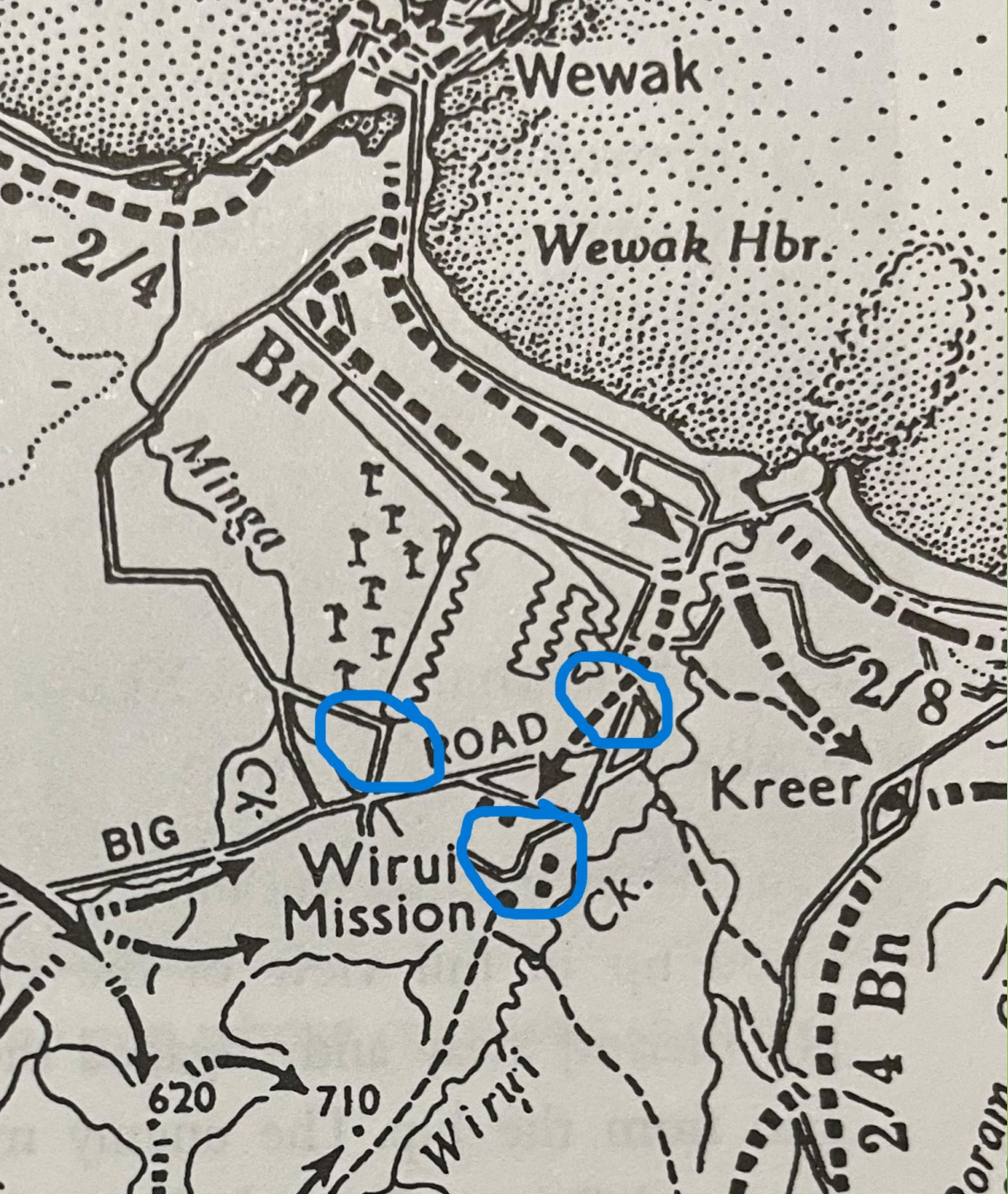




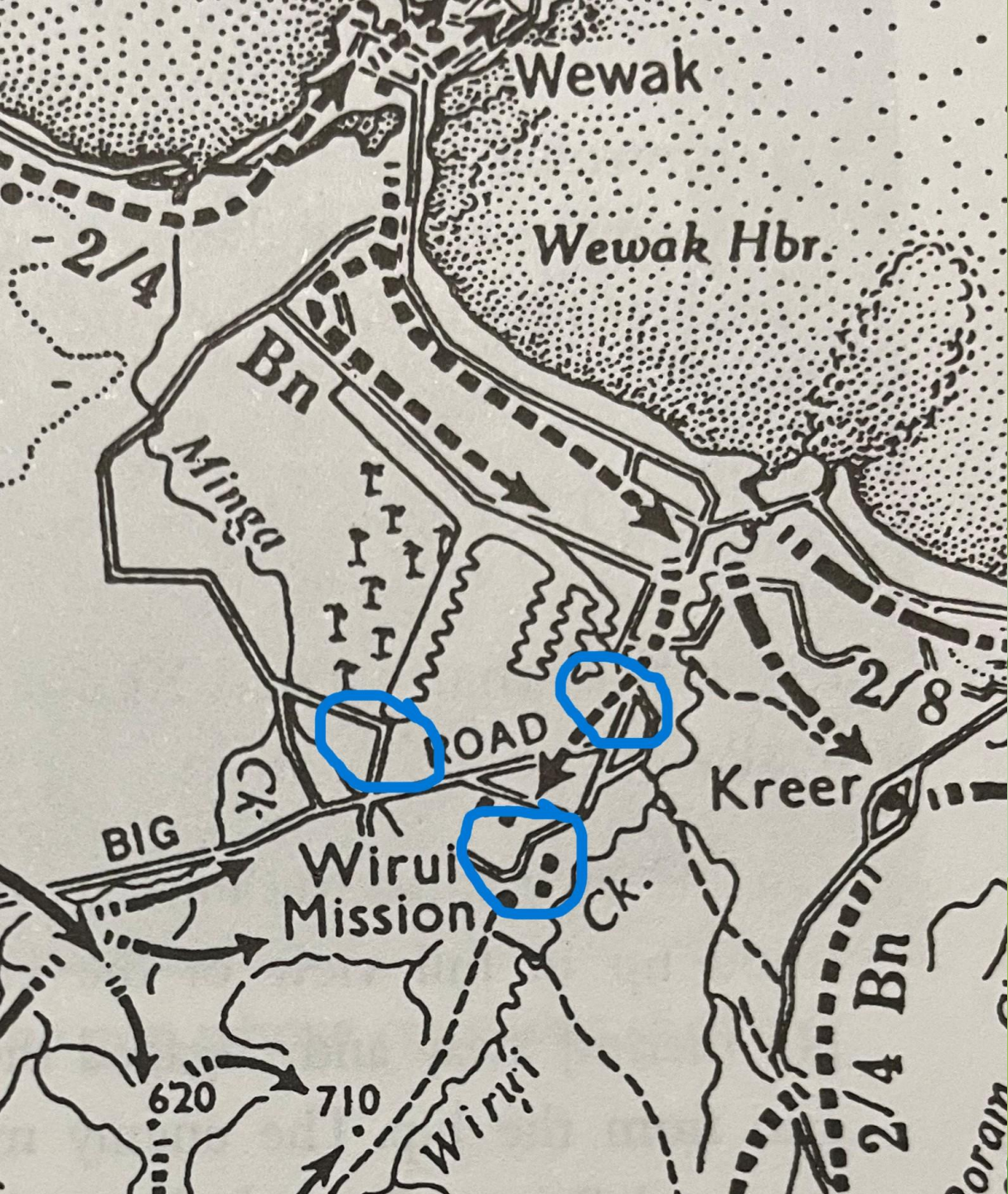
Wirui Mission 11 - 15 May 1945



The 19th Brigade's operations 8-25 May 1945
AWM



The attack on
Wirii Mission
14 May 1945



The attack on
Wirui Mission
15 May 1945



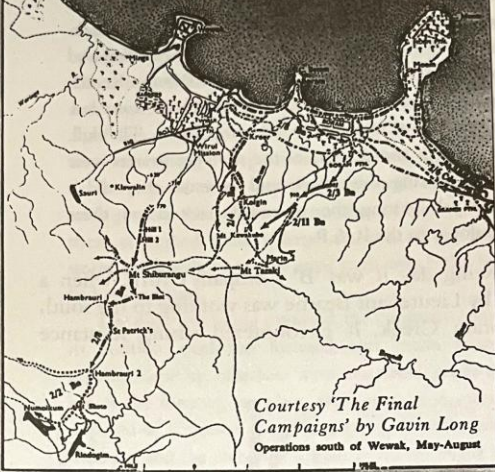
Kenna VC



The Kenna machinegun

A Japanese photograph of the gun whose crew was shot by
Edward Kenna VC

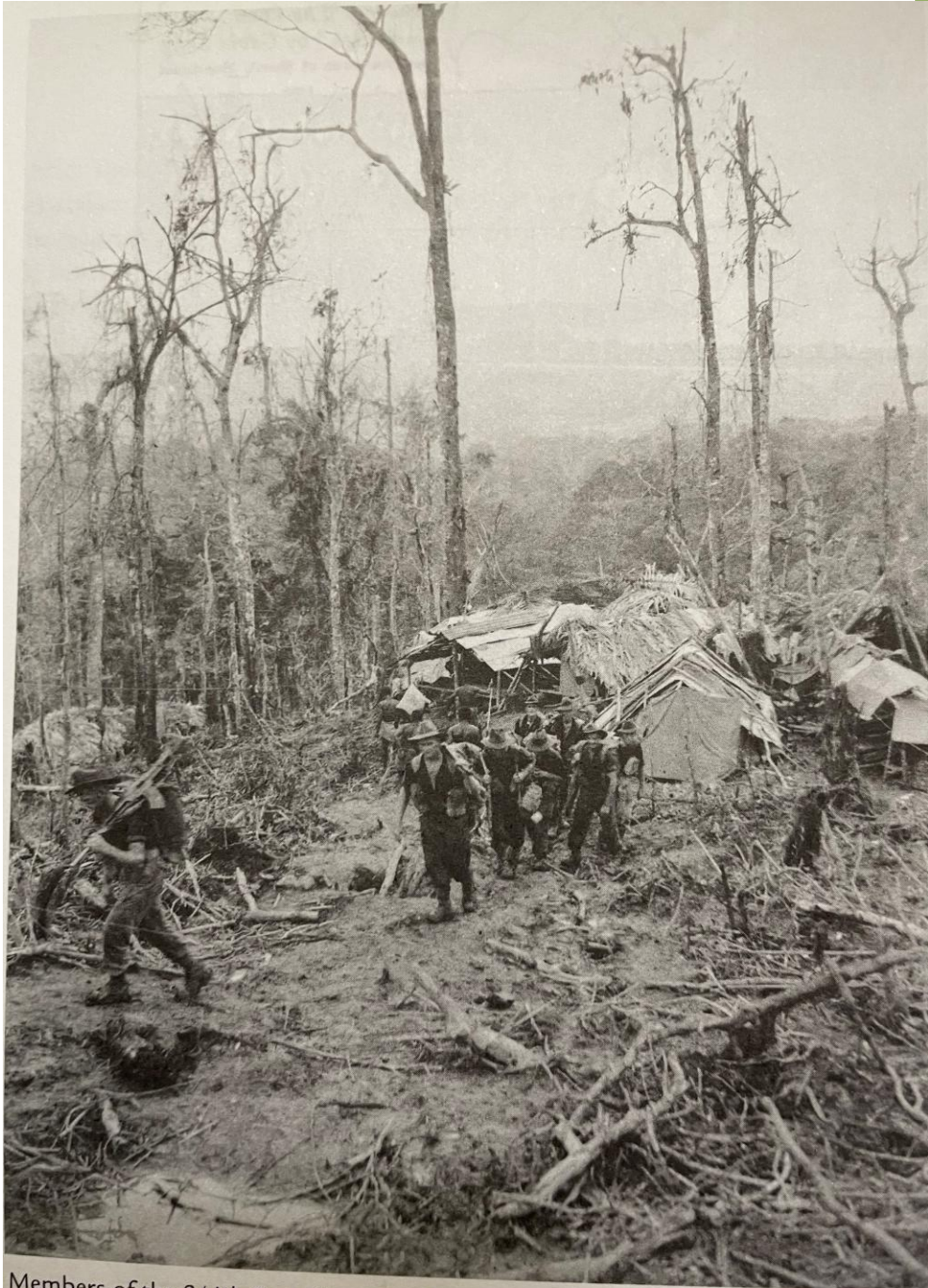
WHITE OVER GREEN



Mount Shiburangu - Mount Tazaki 28 May - 5 July 1945



Heroes have
heroes too



Mt Tazaki

19 - 24 June 1945

Members of the 2/4th Battalion on a devastated Mount Shiburangu
AWM 093995

The end of the war

- ▶ 2,624 men served
- ▶ 94 KIA
- ▶ 243 WIA
- ▶ 195 POW
- ▶ VC x 1
- ▶ DSO x 1
- ▶ MC x 9
- ▶ DCM x 6,
- ▶ MM x 11
- ▶ MID x 53 Mentions
- ▶ MBE x 2

Liberation of Australian New Guinea

18 Sep 43 - 8 Aug 45

- ▶ Nambut Ridge 29 Jan - 19 Feb
- ▶ But-Dague 16 Mar - 5 Apr
- ▶ Hawain River 9-29 Apr
- ▶ Wewak 8-11 May
- ▶ Wirui Mission 11-15 May
- ▶ Mt Shiburangu - Mt Tazaki 28 May - 5 July



► Evaluation



2/4th AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BATTALION

MIDDLE EAST

PALESTINE

EGYPT

LIBYA

TOBRUK

DERNA

BENGHAZI



DARWIN

NEW GUINEA WEWAK, WIRUI MISSION

GREECE

VERVE

SOTIR

BRALLOS PASS

CRETE

HERAKLION

SYRIA

1939 - 1945

IN MEMORY OF DEPARTED COMRADES
WHO SERVED WITH THE
2/4th AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BATTALION
"LEST WE FORGET"

ALF. CARPENTER ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT
1999