

= Battle of Goodenough Island =

The Battle of Goodenough Island (22 ? 27 October 1942) , also known as Operation Drake , was a battle of the Pacific campaign of World War II . The Allies attacked the Kaigun Rikusentai (Special Naval Landing Force) stranded on Goodenough Island , Papua , during the Battle of Milne Bay to deny the Japanese the ability to use the island prior to the Buna campaign . " Drake Force " , consisting of the Australian 2 / 12th Battalion and attachments , landed on the southern tip of Goodenough Island at Mud Bay and Taleba Bay on 22 October , and following a short but heavy fight , the Japanese forces withdrew to Fergusson Island on 27 October . After the battle , Goodenough Island was developed by the Allies and became a major base which they used for further operations later in the war .

= = Background = =

Goodenough Island is the northernmost of the D 'Entrecasteaux Islands , to the north @-@ east of Papua separated by the 15 @-@ mile (24 km) wide Ward Hunt Strait . The island is located 65 miles (105 km) by sea from Milne Bay and 185 miles (298 km) from Port Moresby . It lies along the sea route between Buna and Milne Bay and was therefore strategically important during late 1942 . The island is roughly oval shaped , measuring 21 miles (34 km) long and 13 miles (21 km) across . The coastal belt is up to 5 miles (8 @.@ 0 km) in width , covered in grasslands and dissected by streams and coastal swamps . The island rises sharply to the central summit of Mount Vineuo , 8 @.@ 000 feet (2 @.@ 400 m) above sea level .

While the western side of the island was covered in rain forest and jungle , there were grassy plains on the north @-@ eastern side covered in kunai and kangaroo grass . These were suitable sites for airfield development , but the best anchorages were at Mud Bay on the south eastern side , Taleba Bay on the south western , and Beli Beli Bay on the eastern side . Other sites could only accommodate shallow draught vessels drawing 12 feet (3 @.@ 7 m) or less , were obstructed by coral reefs , or were exposed to the weather thus making them unsuitable for development . The island had no roads , and there was no motor or animal transport . Neither the interior of the island nor the surrounding waters were adequately charted in 1942 . Important features were often missing from maps , and some features had different spellings .

Aircraft and ships headed from Milne Bay to Buna and vice versa had to pass close by Goodenough Island , so an Allied presence on the island could provide warning of Japanese operations while denying the Japanese the opportunity to observe Allied ships and aircraft . Goodenough Island also had flat areas suitable for the construction of emergency airstrips .

= = Prelude = =

In early August 1942 , a small detachment of an American fighter control squadron had been stationed on Goodenough Island to provide advance warning to the Australian fighters based at Milne Bay . On 7 August , five Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) P @-@ 40 Kittyhawks of No. 76 Squadron made forced landings on the grassy plains . After makeshift airstrips were cut through the grass , four of them were able to be flown out again .

On 24 August , seven landing craft carrying 353 Japanese Special Naval Landing Forces troops of the 5th Sasebo Special Naval Landing Force , supplemented by a few engineers of the 14th and 15th Pioneer Units (Setsueitai) , set out from Cape Nelson in the dark to participate in the attack on the Allied forces at Milne Bay . Upon reaching Goodenough Island they were unable to locate a suitable hiding place for their landing craft during the day , and they had to be left on the beach , where they were discovered by the Allies . Their movement was reported by a coastwatcher at Cape Nelson , and a report was received at Milne Bay around midday on 25 August that they were on the west coast of Goodenough Island . Nine Kittyhawks from No. 75 Squadron RAAF were despatched to investigate . They located the landing craft and destroyed all seven , along with the Japanese force 's radio and most of its stores . Eight Japanese were killed in the raid ; the survivors , lacking

transport , were stranded . Meanwhile , the American detachment on Goodenough Island destroyed its radios and withdrew from the island .

News of what had occurred on Goodenough Island reached the Japanese command on 9 September via an orderly who had made his way back to Buna in a canoe . The destroyers Yayoi and Isokaze set out from Rabaul to rescue the men on 10 September . They were sighted by Allied aircraft the next day . The destroyers USS Selfridge , Bagley , Henley and Helm were detached from Task Force 44 , under Captain Cornelius W. Flynn , USN , to intercept . They did not locate the Japanese destroyers , but five Boeing B @-@ 17 Flying Fortresses did . Isokaze escaped , despite a near @-@ miss , but Yayoi sank after taking a direct hit on the stern that set her on fire . Her survivors reached Normanby Island , where they found themselves in a similar predicament to their compatriots on Goodenough Island . After the attack , Isokaze returned to the area where Yayoi had gone down , finding an oil slick , but no survivors . On 22 September , Isokaze returned again , this time with the destroyer Mochizuki , and together they found 10 survivors in a launch . The two destroyers then searched the coast of Normanby Island without success . However , the next day , another 10 survivors were spotted by a patrol plane , and they were rescued on 26 September .

The presence of shipwrecked Japanese sailors on Normanby Island presented no military threat to the Allied forces at Milne Bay , but Captain A. T. Timperley , the Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit (ANG AU) officer responsible for the D 'Entrecasteaux and Trobriand Islands , argued that they posed a threat to the native population and Australia 's reputation as its protector . As a result , C Company , 2 / 10th Infantry Battalion , under the command of Captain J. Brocksopp , was ordered to land on Normanby Island . Leaving Gili Gili on the destroyer HMAS Stuart on 21 September , Brocksopp 's company landed at Nadi Nadi on 22 September , and experienced no opposition . It took eight Japanese as prisoners before returning to Milne Bay on Stuart on 23 September .

Meanwhile , messages and food supplies had been air dropped by the Japanese to the troops on Goodenough on 10 and 12 September . On 3 October , the submarine I @-@ 1 arrived at Goodenough Island , and dropped off rations , ammunition , medical supplies , a radio and a landing craft . It took 71 sick or wounded men , all it could carry , back to Rabaul , along with the bodies of 13 dead . This left 285 Japanese troops on the island , most of whom were suffering from malaria . I @-@ 1 returned on 13 October with more rations and medical supplies , and a second landing craft , but was driven off by an Allied aircraft that dropped a flare . On 15 October , they received a radio message warning that the Allies were showing considerable interest in Goodenough Island and were likely to invade .

The Allied Supreme Commander of the South West Pacific Area , General Douglas MacArthur , issued new orders on 1 October :

Our Forces in the Southwest Pacific Area [will] attack with the immediate objective of driving the Japanese to the northward of the Kumusi River line . The New Guinea Force will :

Advance along the axes Nauro ? Kokoda ? Wairopi and Rigo ? Dorobisolo ? Jaure ? Wairopi and / or Abau ? Namudi ? Jaure ? Wairopi Trail , both inclusive , with the objective of securing the line of the Kumusi River from Awalama Divide to the crossing of the Kokoda ? Buna Trail , both inclusive .

Occupy and hold Goodenough Island and the north coast of Southeastern New Guinea south of Cape Nelson in such force as to deny these areas to the Japanese forces .

Upon securing these objectives , all land forces will prepare for further advance to secure the area Buna ? Gona upon further orders of this Headquarters .

= = Battle = =

As part of an operation codenamed " Drake " , the 2 / 12th Infantry Battalion , a Second Australian Imperial Force unit from the 18th Infantry Brigade , which was composed mainly of men from Queensland and Tasmania , was selected to invade Goodenough Island . Its commanding officer , Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Arnold , as the commander of Drake Force , was ordered to destroy the Japanese force there , re @-@ establish the coastwatching and radar warning posts , and reconnoitre the island for airfield sites . Intelligence reports indicated that there were approximately

300 Japanese troops on the island , mainly concentrated in the Galaiwau Bay ? Kilia Mission area in the south east . The Japanese were believed to be short of food and ammunition , and suffering from malnutrition and disease .

Boarding the destroyers HMAS Stuart and Arunta on 22 October , the Australian troops were transported to Goodenough Island escorted by Task Force 44 . Arriving that night , the battalion disembarked on both sides of the island 's southern tip . It was planned to trap the Japanese between the main force of 520 troops , commanded by Arnold , which landed at Mud Bay , and a smaller force of 120 men , mostly from C Company , commanded by Major Keith Gatewood , which landed at Taleba Bay , about 6 miles (9 @. @ 7 km) away . Australian landing craft were unavailable , but the 2 / 12th Infantry Battalion had three ketches , the Matoma , Maclaren King and Tieryo , three Japanese landing craft that had been captured in the Battle of Milne Bay , and two powered whaleboats . Seven days ' rations were carried on these craft , and another seven days ' on the two destroyers . Each man carried three days ' rations .

Drake Force had two AWA 3B Wireless Sets for maintaining communication with Milne Force . One was taken to Mud Bay while the other remained on Arunta . Two Army No. 101 Wireless Sets enabled battalion headquarters to communicate with Mud Bay . In addition , each company had an Army No. 108 Wireless Set to talk to battalion headquarters .

The Mud Bay force travelled in Arunta and came ashore at 23 : 00 in the Maclaren King , two of the ship 's launches , the three Japanese landing craft and the two powered whaleboats . A base was established ashore at Mud Bay , where a dressing station was prepared and heavy equipment , including all but one 2 @- @ inch mortar per company , was cached . The Australians then set out on a gruelling march to Kilia . As they did so , a violent thunderstorm broke , and it started to rain heavily . The force pushed on toward Kilia , but made slow progress that night due to the steep terrain and heavy rain . They were still half a mile from Kilia at 08 : 30 on 23 October , when they encountered the Japanese .

The Australians were crossing a creek behind which was a steep hill . The Japanese commander waited until the Australians were almost at his position before opening fire with machine guns and mortars . The troops who had crossed the creek found hand grenades were being rolled down the hill at them ; those behind it were pinned down by heavy and accurate fire . Arnold decided to pull back . That night , he formed a defensive position , and beat off a small Japanese counterattack .

Meanwhile , the Taleba Bay force , which travelled on Stuart , and came ashore in Tieryo , a ship 's launch and a ship 's whaleboat , was ashore by 03 : 30 on 23 October . They captured a Japanese machine gun position at about 06 : 00 . Two platoons went south where they were engaged by Japanese forces . The Japanese were driven beyond Niubulu Creek , but a heavy Japanese counterattack from the north at 09 : 00 inflicted casualties on the Australians and forced them to withdraw from the area . Gatewood broke radio silence and attempted to contact Arnold on the 108 set , but was unable to reach him . After this , they came under heavy mortar and machine gun fire , which inflicted heavy casualties . Having lost six men killed and ten wounded , with three more posted as missing , the Australians were forced to fall back under pressure from the pursuing Japanese . Lieutenant Clifford Hoskings would later receive the Military Cross for silencing a Japanese machine gun in the ensuing fighting . Faced with being overrun , Gatewood withdrew his force even further , at first back to Taleba Bay , and then to Mud Bay aboard Stuart , arriving on 24 October .

Gatewood could not get through on the radio because the petrol generator that supplied power to the radios at Mud Bay had broken down , thereby cutting Arnold 's link with Mud Bay , Milne Force and Taleba Bay . Arnold launched an attack on Kilia at 09 : 10 , supported by two 3 @- @ inch mortars and 100 rounds that had been brought up from Mud Bay . A promised air strike failed to arrive . Instead , Japanese aircraft strafed the Australian positions , as well as the ketch McLaren King in Mud Bay . It had some wounded men on board , and further casualties were caused . Arnold attempted a flanking movement with A Company , but it became lost in the jungle . The attack then became a frontal one against the main Japanese defences , which Arnold chose not to press .

With the Australian forces unable to advance , the Japanese were able to withdraw during the night . They were transported , along with their equipment and supplies , by the two landing craft to

Fergusson Island , where they arrived at dawn on 25 October . From there , 261 men were collected by the light cruiser Tenryu the following day . The 2 / 12th Infantry Battalion then pressed on from Kilia to Galaiwai Bay , meeting no resistance and finding well @-@ prepared but unmanned defences .

The bombing and strafing of native villages by the Allied Air Forces caused some 600 Goodenough Islanders to flee to Fergusson Island , where Timperley 's ANGAU detachment had set up a refugee camp , and cared for them until the fighting was over and they could safely return . Australian losses on Goodenough Island were 13 killed in action or died of wounds , and 19 wounded . The Japanese suffered 20 killed and 15 wounded during the battle , but the 2 / 12th counted 39 dead . However , this was only an estimate as the Japanese had been able to retrieve and bury their dead , which had made it difficult for the Australians to accurately determine their casualties . Despite the evacuation , a number of Japanese were left behind . One was captured by islanders on 30 October and handed over to Timperley . There was also a group of three , of which two died from malaria in November 1942 , and the third , Shigeki Yokota , was taken prisoner in July 1943 .

= = Aftermath = =

= = = Deception = = =

Two American officers , one each from the Air Corps and the Corps of Engineers , had accompanied the 2 / 12th Infantry Battalion 's landing on Goodenough Island with the mission of locating suitable sites for airbases and air warning facilities . They found good sites around Vivigani and Wataluma . The Vivigani site was cleared by local labourers who established a 4 @, @ 000 @-@ foot (1 @, @ 200 m) by 100 @-@ foot (30 m) emergency fighter landing strip . The 1st Battalion , 91st Engineer General Service Regiment was assigned the task of developing Vivigani Airfield into a major airbase capable of handling heavy bombers . The 2 / 12th Infantry Battalion remained on the island until the end of December , eventually being shipped to Oro Bay on the night of 28 ? 29 December to join the attack on Buna on 31 December , leaving 75 men behind . The American engineers were withdrawn to Port Moresby .

Without the engineers , the plans to develop Goodenough Island had to be postponed . Due to the strategic importance of the island for the forthcoming operations against the Imperial Japanese forces in the South West Pacific Area , the small Australian occupation force used deception and camouflage to make the Japanese believe that a brigade @-@ sized force was occupying the island . They fabricated dummy structures , including a hospital , anti @-@ aircraft guns constructed of simple logs pointed at the sky , and barricades of jungle vines which looked like barbed wire . They also lit fires to appear as cooking fires for large numbers of soldiers , and sent messages in easily broken codes consistent with a brigade .

= = = Garrison = = =

A new garrison , the Australian 47th Infantry Battalion , a Militia unit under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Henry Tasker , arrived from Milne Bay on 4 March 1943 . This became the major component of Drake Force , which also included a company of the 4th Field Ambulance , C Troop of the 2 / 10th Field Battery , B Troop of the 2 / 17th Light Anti @-@ Aircraft Battery , a section of the 11th Field Company , and detachments of signals , workshop and camouflage units . In all , Drake Force had a total strength of about 720 men . On 5 and 6 March , Japanese bombers attacked ships in the anchorage , and the airstrip and village at Vivigani , but caused no damage and only wounded two men .

In the aftermath of the Battle of the Bismarck Sea , Japanese troops and sailors were again shipwrecked on Goodenough Island . Responding to reports from ANGAU , the police and civilian informants , patrols searched the island for Japanese survivors . In a week of vigorous patrolling between 8 and 14 March 1943 , the 47th Infantry Battalion located and killed 72 Japanese ,

captured 42 , and found another nine dead on a raft . A remarkable coup was achieved by a patrol under Captain Joseph Pascoe that killed eight Japanese who had landed in two flat @-@ bottomed boats . In the boats they found some documents in sealed tins . On translation by the Allied Translator and Interpreter Section , one document turned out to be a copy of the Japanese Army List , with the names and postings of every officer in the Japanese Army . It therefore provided a complete order of battle of the Japanese Army , including many units that had never been reported before . Moreover , a mention of any Japanese officer could now be correlated with his unit . Copies were made available to intelligence units in every theatre of war against Japan .

= = = Base development = = =

Meanwhile , a four @-@ man survey party from No. 5 Mobile Works Squadron RAAF arrived on Goodenough Island on 3 January 1943 . They selected Beli Beli Bay as a suitable site for an anchorage . Here , a 5 @,@ 000 ton (14 @,@ 000 m³) ship could anchor half a mile (0 @.@ 8 km) offshore with a some degree of shelter from the south east and north west . A member of the survey team and 100 local workers recruited by ANGAU began constructing a jetty at Beli Beli Bay and improving the foot track to Vivigani . An advance party of 54 men from No. 5 Mobile Works Squadron arrived on 27 February 1943 .

Plans for Operation Chronicle , the invasion of Woodlark and Kiriwina Islands , called for fighter cover from Goodenough Island . The operation was scheduled for June 1943 , so the pace of construction work was lifted . The rest of No. 5 Airfield Construction Squadron arrived in late March , followed by No. 7 Mobile Works Squadron in April . A 5 @,@ 100 @-@ foot (1 @,@ 600 m) fighter strip was completed and sealed with a mixture of gravel and bitumen . P @-@ 40 Kittyhawks of No. 77 Squadron RAAF arrived on 12 June . It was joined by No. 76 Squadron RAAF and No. 79 Squadron RAAF on 16 June , and No. 73 Wing RAAF assumed control of the three fighter squadrons on the island . A 6 @,@ 000 @-@ foot (1 @,@ 800 m) by 100 @-@ foot (30 m) bomber strip was completed on 20 October , although No. 30 Squadron RAAF had already commenced operations from the strip on 10 October . Work on the airbase at Vivigani continued until November , by which time there were taxiways and dispersal areas for 24 heavy and 60 medium bombers , and 115 fighters . No. 7 Mobile Works Squadron also built two wharves for Liberty ships .

The island , now codenamed " Amoeba " , became a staging point and supply base for operations in New Guinea and New Britain , and USASOS Sub Base C was established on the island on 27 April 1943 . Sub Base C was abolished in July when responsibility for Goodenough Island passed to Alamo Force , whose headquarters opened on Goodenough Island on 15 August . From there , it directed operations in the Battles of Arawae and Cape Gloucester , and the landing at Saidor .

In August 1943 , Goodenough Island was chosen as the site for a number of hospitals to treat casualties incurred as Allied forces advanced through the Pacific . Work on the 750 @-@ bed 360th Station Hospital commenced on 15 September 1943 , followed by the 1 @,@ 000 @-@ bed 9th General Hospital on 4 November . A staging area for 60 @,@ 000 troops was also established on the island . Thousands of American troops later passed through Goodenough Island before the base was wound up at the end of 1944 .