

### Timeline of the war in PNG

Year	Month	Headline	Event
1940	June	First Papuan soldiers	Papuan Infantry Battalion (PIB) formed, comprising members of the Royal Papuan Constabulary mostly from the Buna area, and later from other parts of the Territory of Papua
1941	April	Australian troops arrive	Australian troops (2/22 <sup>nd</sup> Battalion) arrive to form Lark Force in New Guinea, stationed in New Britain and New Ireland
	December	War comes to the Pacific	Japanese forces attack Pearl Harbor, Hong Kong, and Malaya  Australian women and children ordered to evacuate from Territories of Papua and New Guinea
1942	January	Fall of Rabaul and Kavieng	Australian troops (39 <sup>th</sup> & 53 <sup>rd</sup> Battalions) arrive in Port Moresby  Japanese aircraft attack targets in New Britain, New Ireland, and the New Guinea mainland  Japanese troops invade and capture Rabaul and Kavieng  Australian troops are captured or retreat west and south from Rabaul
1942	February	Massacre at Tol Plantation	First raid by Japanese aircraft on Port Moresby  Japanese execute 160 Australian prisoners of war at Tol Plantation in New Britain  Civil administration is suspended, replaced by the Papuan Administrative Unit and the New Guinea Administrative Unit  More air raids on Port Moresby
1942	March	Mainland New Guinea occupied	Japanese troops capture Lae, Salamaua, and Finschhafen  Japanese aircraft attack Madang  Australian and United States aircraft arrive in Port Moresby  Continuing air raids on Port Moresby

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1942	April	Bombing of Port Moresby	<p>Papuan Administrative Unit and New Guinea Administrative Unit combined to form the Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit (ANGAU)</p> <p>United States troops (41<sup>st</sup> Division) arrive in Port Moresby</p> <p>'Kanga Force' established in the Wau-Bulolo area, from the New Guinea Volunteer Rifles and the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> Independent Companies</p> <p>Japanese occupy Aitape</p> <p>Continuing air raids on Port Moresby</p>
1942	May	Allied victory in Coral Sea	<p>Japanese invasion forces depart Rabaul and Truk</p> <p>Battle of the Coral Sea; Japanese Port Moresby invasion force withdraws</p> <p>Australian troops (14<sup>th</sup> Brigade) arrive in Port Moresby</p> <p>Australian soldiers (Kanga Force) move to Wau to conduct operations against Japanese at Lae and Salamaua</p> <p>Continuing air raids on Port Moresby</p>
1942	June	Milne Bay airfields	<p>Existing labour contracts for Papuans and New Guineans terminated, allowing them to be conscripted for labour</p> <p>Australian and US forces establish airfields in Milne Bay area; Papuan labourers working for ANGAU build wharf and other facilities at Gili Gili</p> <p>Kanga Force carries out raid on Japanese base at Salamaua</p> <p>Continuing air raids on Port Moresby</p>
1942	July	Japanese landings at Buna and Gona	<p>Japanese forces land in the Buna-Gona area of Papua's Northern District</p> <p>Papuan Infantry Battalion has its baptism of fire when it engages Japanese troops for the first time at Awala</p> <p>Papuan labourers work on establishing staging camps along the Kokoda Trail</p>

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			<p>Japanese troops advance to Kokoda; Australian troops conduct fighting retreat before them</p> <p>Papuan labourers help construct first airfield at Milne Bay</p> <p>Australian troops arrive at Milne Bay</p> <p>Continuing air raids on Port Moresby</p>
1942	August	Japanese take Kokoda and land in Milne Bay	<p>US forces land at Guadalcanal in Solomon Islands</p> <p>Japanese troops occupy Kokoda and advance to Deniki and Isurava, where they are held for a few days by Australian forces</p> <p>Japanese forces land in Milne Bay and move in the direction of the airfields at the western end of the Bay, fighting through several villages</p> <p>Continuing air raids on Port Moresby</p>
1942	September	Japanese repulsed in Milne Bay	<p>Japanese troops advance to Imita Ridge on Kokoda Trail, within sight of Port Moresby</p> <p>Australian and US forces defeat Japanese troops in Battle of Milne Bay</p> <p>Japanese begin to withdraw back to Gona, pursued by Australians</p> <p>Continuing air raids on Port Moresby</p>
1942	October	Japanese defeats on Kokoda Trail	<p>Japanese defeated at Eora-Templeton's Crossing</p> <p>Australian base at Wau is reinforced</p> <p>Continuing air raids on Port Moresby</p>
1942	November	Kokoda recaptured	<p>Australian troops recapture Kokoda</p> <p>Japanese defeated at Oivi-Gorari</p> <p>Japanese withdraw from Guadalcanal in Solomons</p> <p>Battle of Buna-Gona commences as Australian and US forces attack Japanese positions</p> <p>Papuan Infantry Battalion actively patrolling Kumusi-Mambare-Waria area</p> <p>Number of Japanese air raids on Port Moresby declines</p>

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1942	December	Australians victorious at Gona	Australian troops defeat Japanese at Gona Japanese forces occupy Madang and Wewak
1943	January	Last Japanese foothold in Papua retaken	US and Australian troops defeat Japanese at Buna Japanese final foothold at Sanananda overwhelmed; organised Japanese resistance in Territory of Papua concludes PIB troops engage retreating parties of Japanese Australian troops of the 17 <sup>th</sup> Brigade fly into Wau Japanese forces at Lae and Salamaua are reinforced, and a detachment of the 51 <sup>st</sup> Division advances towards Wau
1943	February	Attack on Wau repelled	Australian troops supported by US aircraft stop the Japanese attack on Wau Japanese planes conduct large air raid on Wau airfield, losing several aircraft to US fighters Japanese troops withdraw from Wau to Mubo, pursued by Australians Guadalcanal in Solomon Islands declared secure by US forces
1943	March	Battle of the Bismarck Sea	Japanese attempt to reinforce Lae and Salamaua is defeated in the Battle of the Bismarck Sea, with the loss of eight Japanese merchant ships and four warships Japanese aircraft raid Wau and Milne Bay US troops of the 41 <sup>st</sup> Division cross into the Territory of New Guinea at the Waria River US forces occupy Russell Islands in Solomons
1943	April	Milne Bay bases established	Japanese air raids on Port Moresby, Oro Bay, and Milne Bay Australian 3 <sup>rd</sup> Division establishes headquarters at Bulolo Australian forces of the 17 <sup>th</sup> Brigade launch attack on Japanese at Mubo

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			<p>Japan's most prominent naval commander, Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, killed when his plane was shot down over Bougainville</p> <p>US base at Milne Bay (designated 'Base A') is established and subsequently becomes major centre of US operations</p>
1943	May	Allied air raids on Japanese positions	<p>Japanese forces stage counterattack on Australian troops at Mubo</p> <p>Australian soldiers of the 2/6<sup>th</sup> Battalion move towards Markham River valley along Watut and Wampit River valleys</p> <p>US, Australian and New Zealand aircraft carry out raids on Japanese positions in Wewak, Madang, Rabaul, Morobe, and West New Britain</p>
1943	June	US troops at Nassau Bay	<p>US forces invade Japanese-held New Georgia in Solomon Islands as first step of Operation Cartwheel</p> <p>US forces carry out landings on Kiriwina and Woodlark Islands</p> <p>US forces land at Nassau Bay as part of build-up around Salamaua</p> <p>Japanese conduct unsuccessful attack on Australian forces at Lababia Ridge, south of Salamaua</p> <p>PIB soldiers infiltrate Japanese-held territory around Salamaua</p> <p>Australian military base at Milne Bay is established</p>
1943	July	Advance on Salamaua	<p>US begins construction of airbase on Kiriwina Island</p> <p>Execution of five Papuans, including Embogi, at Higaturu by Australian military officials after they were found guilty of assisting the Japanese occupying forces</p> <p>Japanese are forced back from Mubo towards Salamaua by Australian, Papuan, and US troops</p> <p>PIB troops patrol area to the south of the Markham River</p>



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1943	August	Japanese bombs on Tsili Tsili	<p>Allied troops attack Japanese positions at Komiatum and Mt Tambu, outside Salamaua</p> <p>US and Australian air raids on Japanese airfields at Salamaua, Lae, Madang, and Wewak</p> <p>Japanese air raids on Allied airfield at Tsili Tsili in Eastern Highlands</p> <p>US troops secure New Georgia in Solomon Islands</p>
1943	September	Allies retake Lae	<p>Japanese stronghold at Salamaua is taken by Australian, Papuan, and US forces</p> <p>Operation Postern, the combined Allied assault to retake Lae and the Huon Peninsula, begins with landings by the 9<sup>th</sup> Australian Division east of Lae and parachute landings by the 503<sup>rd</sup> US Parachute Regiment at Nadzab, followed by 7<sup>th</sup> Australian Division troops</p> <p>Japanese forces withdraw from Lae to the Saruwaged Range and along the Markham River valley to the west, with Australian and Papuan troops in pursuit</p> <p>With US naval and air support, Australians land at Scarlet Beach and move to retake Finschhafen</p> <p>Australian 2/6<sup>th</sup> Independent Company and PIB soldiers drive Japanese from Kaiapit in Markham valley</p>
1943	October	Pursuit up the Markham Valley	<p>Finschhafen recaptured by Australian 9<sup>th</sup> Division</p> <p>Dumpu in Ramu River valley taken by Australian 7<sup>th</sup> Division</p> <p>Japanese retreat into Finisterre Range towards Madang, pursued by Australian and Papuan troops</p> <p>US aircraft raid Japanese positions on Wewak, Bougainville and Shortland Islands</p> <p>US and Australian air raids on Rabaul</p> <p>Japanese air raids on Allied airfields and bases at Oro Bay and Doboduru</p>

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1943	November	Americans land at Torokina	<p>Papuan Infantry Battalion patrol Ramu Valley, probing into Japanese-held territory</p> <p>Australian 26<sup>th</sup> Brigade overcomes Japanese forces in Battle of Sattelberg, pushing them further into the rugged mountains inland</p> <p>US 3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Division land at Cape Torokina in Bougainville</p> <p>Allied air raids on Japanese installations, airfields and shipping in Rabaul and surrounding area, in support of landings in Bougainville</p> <p>US Navy ships prevent Japanese attempt to stop landings</p>
1943	December	Landings in New Britain	<p>US forces, including the 112<sup>th</sup> Cavalry and 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division make landings at Arawe and Cape Gloucester in West New Britain</p> <p>Australian troops begin attack on entrenched Japanese positions on Shaggy Ridge (Finisterre Range)</p> <p>US airfield at Torokina established</p> <p>Allied air raids on Wewak, Cape Gloucester, Madang, Rabaul and surrounding area throughout December</p>
1944	January	Japanese pushed back from Shaggy Ridge	<p>Japanese positions on Shaggy Ridge eliminated, while Australians continue attack to Kankiryō Saddle, to the north of Shaggy Ridge, closer to Madang</p> <p>US 32<sup>nd</sup> Division, based on Goodenough Island, lands at Saidor, on north coast of Huon Peninsula</p> <p>Australian 9<sup>th</sup> Division and Papuan Infantry Battalion pursue Japanese retreating towards Madang through the Huon Peninsula</p> <p>Regular bombing raids on Japanese positions in and around Madang, Rabaul, Kavieng, and Wewak</p>
1944	February	Landings in the Admiralty Islands	<p>Japanese forces conduct fighting retreat through Finisterre Range to Bogadjim, pursued by Australian 11<sup>th</sup> Division</p>

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			<p>Australian troops of the 5<sup>th</sup> Division and US forces join up at Saidor</p> <p>3<sup>rd</sup> New Zealand Division secures Nissan and Green Islands, enabling airfields to be constructed for attacking Japanese positions in Rabaul and Kavieng</p> <p>US 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division lands at Los Negros in Admiralty Islands</p> <p>Continuation of daily Allied bombing missions against Japanese-held positions at Wewak, Madang, Rabaul and Kavieng</p> <p>US Navy ships bombard Kavieng</p>
1944	March	Kavieng massacre	<p>Occupation of Manus and remaining Admiralty Islands completed, following defeat of Japanese forces</p> <p>Fearing invasion by the Allies, Japanese execute 32 Australian civilians and German clergy detainees at Kavieng</p> <p>1<sup>st</sup> New Guinea Infantry Battalion formed, from New Guinean members of Papuan Infantry Battalion</p> <p>Continuation of daily Allied bombing missions against Japanese-held positions at Wewak, Madang, Rabaul and Kavieng</p> <p>US landings on Emirau complete encirclement of Japanese base at Rabaul</p>
1944	April	Aitape and Hollandia landings	<p>Madang retaken by Australian troops of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigades, followed shortly afterwards by Alexishafen</p> <p>Papuan Infantry Battalion conducts active patrols between Madang and Sepik River</p> <p>US and Australian forces make landings at Aitape and Hollandia, to isolate Japanese 18<sup>th</sup> Army at Wewak</p> <p>Weather permitting, Allied aircraft conduct daily air raids on Rabaul area throughout the month</p>



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1944	May	Continuing bombing of Rabaul	Allied bombing missions on Japanese positions at Wewak, Hansa Bay, Rabaul, and Bougainville Australian and Papuan troops patrol between Alexishafen and Sepik Rver US troops attack Japanese positions in Dutch New Guinea, further isolating Japanese 18 <sup>th</sup> Army at Wewak
1944	June	Indian POWs rescued	Australians occupy Bogia and Hansa Bay A group of escaped Indian prisoners of the Japanese is rescued near Ramu River mouth Daily air raids on Japanese positions at Rabaul, Wewak and Bougainville
1944	July	US forces held up by Japanese	Japanese 18 <sup>th</sup> Army attacks US forces between Aitape and Wewak PIB troops conduct active patrolling between the Ramu and Sepik River mouths Daily bombing raids continue
1944	August	Relentless bombing	PIB and New Guinea Infantry Battalion undergo training and reorganisation at Bisiatabu Daily bombing raids continue
1944	September	Expansion of NGIB	Daily bombing raids continue 2 <sup>nd</sup> New Guinea Infantry Battalion formed from PIB
1944	October	Australians take over from US forces	II Australian Corps including the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Division takes over from US forces at Torokina in Bougainville and, with the New Guinea Infantry Battalion and the Fiji Infantry Regiment in support, commences offensive operations against Japanese 17 <sup>th</sup> Army Australian 6 <sup>th</sup> Division takes over from US forces at Aitape and commences operations against Japanese 18 <sup>th</sup> Army
1944	November	Jacquinet Bay landings	Australian 6 <sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade lands at Jacquinet Bay on south coast of New Britain, where port facilities and an airfield are established Australian 36 <sup>th</sup> Battalion establishes base at Cape Hoskins on north coast of New Britain

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			<p>Australian 6<sup>th</sup> Division advances towards Maprik and Wewak from Aitape</p> <p>Papuan and New Guinea Infantry Battalions joined as Pacific Islands Regiment</p>
1944	December	Japanese cut off in Bougainville	<p>Battle of Pearl Ridge allows Australian forces to control central Bougainville, isolating Japanese units to the north and south of the island</p> <p>Active patrolling by Australian forces from Cape Hoskins and Jacquinet Bay</p>
1945	January	Japanese forces pushed to north and south tips of Bougainville	<p>Australian 31<sup>st</sup>/51<sup>st</sup> Infantry Battalion pushes Japanese back at Battle of Tsimba Ridge in Bougainville's north</p> <p>Australian 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion and New Guinea Infantry Battalion troops carry out amphibious landings on the south coast of Bougainville</p> <p>New Guinea Infantry Battalion joins 36<sup>th</sup> Battalion at Cape Hoskins</p> <p>Allied air raids on Rabaul</p>
1945	February	Australians and PIR isolate Japanese in Rabaul	<p>Australian forces move south towards Buin, engaging Japanese</p> <p>In New Britain, Australian and PIR units push towards Open Bay and Wide Bay to isolate Japanese in Gazelle Peninsula</p>
1945	March	Closing in on Wewak	<p>Australians occupy Japanese positions at But and Dagua</p> <p>Australian 6<sup>th</sup> Brigade consolidate positions across neck of Gazelle Peninsula to seal off Japanese in Rabaul</p>
1945	April	Slater's Knoll	<p>Battle of Slater's Knoll results in defeat of large Japanese force</p> <p>Maprik captured by Australian 17<sup>th</sup> Brigade</p>
1945	May	PIB to Bougainville	<p>Australians capture Wewak</p> <p>Papuan Infantry Battalion goes to Bougainville</p>
1945	June	Last pockets of Japanese resistance overcome	<p>Attempt by Australians to outflank Japanese at Porton Plantation in north Bougainville repelled</p>

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			Australian 2/8 <sup>th</sup> Battalion and 2/4 <sup>th</sup> Battalion defeat Japanese at Mt Shiburangu and Mt Tazaki in Prince Alexander Mountains south of Wewak
1945	July	Fighting in north Bougainville	Clashes between Australian and PIB troops and Japanese at Bonis Peninsula in northern Bougainville  Australian troops continue to engage Japanese south of Wewak
1945	August	Atomic bombs	Atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan  Japanese unconditional surrender  Japanese ambush PIB patrol on day before cessation of hostilities on Bougainville
1945	September	Final surrender	Japanese surrender at ceremonies on board the HMS <i>Glory</i> between New Ireland and New Britain on 6 September, Torokina on 8 September, and at Cape Wom, near Wewak, on 13 September