

Despite her crippled status, the ENTERPRISE and her planes took an active part in the battle, accounting for three torpedo hits on a Japanese battleship, which later sank, and hits on two heavy and one light cruiser.

Except for encounters with the "Tokyo Express", surface naval action in the Guadalcanal area ended with the battle of Tassafaronga or Lunga Point on 30 November.

The First Marine Division was gradually withdrawn from Guadalcanal; replaced by Army troops; and in December, command was turned over to the Army.

By 8 February 1943, exactly six months after our landing in the Solomons, the enemy completed his evacuation of Guadalcanal and the first Solomons campaign ended.

Our Navy had written another glorious chapter in the history of World War II, because it alone prevented the Japs from getting ashore in large numbers and decimating our troops which were ashore.

The offensive phase of the Pacific War followed the evacuation of Guadalcanal on 8 February 1943, but this evacuation was by no means an indication that the Japanese were retiring from the Solomons. On the contrary, there was ample evidence that they would make every effort to retain their positions in the Solomons and in New Guinea.

Having pushed the Japs out of the Southern Solomons, our next undertaking was to push them out of the Northern Solomons. On 21 February, our forces made landings in the Russell Islands, 50 miles northwest of Guadalcanal.

There were no noteworthy naval engagements for some time during the period when preparations were being made for the invasion of New Georgia, although aerial operations were intensified throughout the South Pacific area. Japanese raids were frequent and heavy even though carried out at severe cost to the enemy.

On 16 June, one of the most furious air battles of the Pacific war was fought over Guadalcanal with disastrous results to the Japanese.

Between 30 June and 5 July a series of landings were made on New Guinea and also on New Georgia Islands. The two engagements in Kula Gulf, 6 and 13 July, were costly but they removed a threat of naval action by the enemy which might have jeopardized our landings on the north coast of New Georgia and they knocked out the Kula Gulf route to supply and reinforce their garrisons at Villa and Buna.

The capture of Buna airfield on 5 August, almost a year after the first landing on Guadalcanal clinched the central Solomons campaign.

A Japanese force was thoroughly beaten, with no losses to our forces, in the battle of Vella Gulf on 6 August, and on 15 August landings were made on Vella Lavella.

The Navy engaged in several successful actions in August and September and by 6 October the Central Solomons Campaign ended.

October witnessed the successful invasion of Bougainville and Choiseul Islands followed by several successful naval engagements in October, November and December.

In the meantime action in the campaign against New Guinea was progressing and in September Allied amphibious forces captured Salamaua, followed by the capture of Iao, five days later. Other strong points were soon captured, and by 13 February occupation of the eastern peninsula (Huon) of New Guinea was completed.