

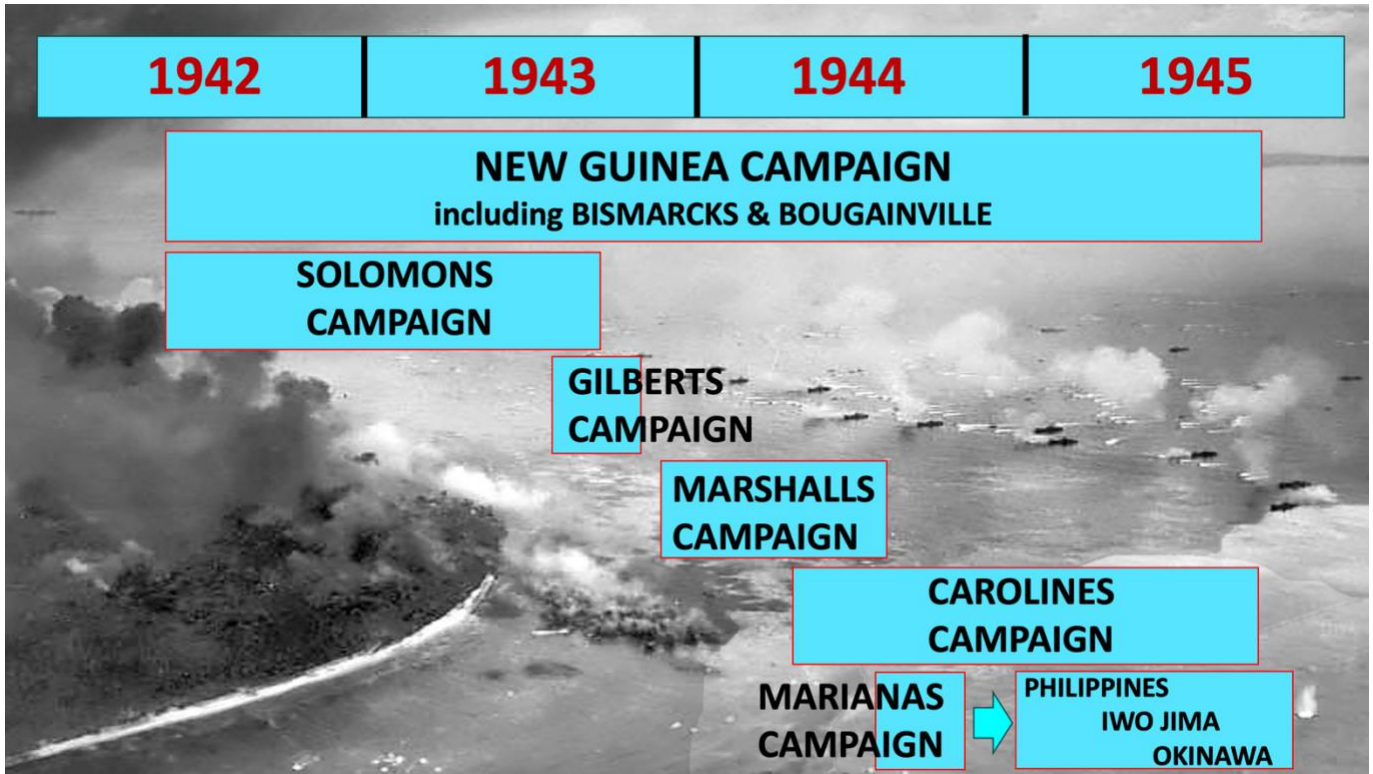
The SOLOMON ISLANDS CAMPAIGN - A TIMELINE

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May 1942	The Japanese begin to occupy the British-controlled Solomon Islands, constructing a major air and sea base at Tulagi. Allies respond with bombings of Tulagi as part of the Battle of the Coral Sea.
July 1942	The Japanese invade and occupy Guadalcanal with little resistance.
Aug 1942	The Allies invade Tulagi and Guadalcanal in the first major amphibious invasion of the War. Japan is victorious in the naval Battle of Savo Island. The Allies prevail in the Battle of the Eastern Solomons.
Sept 1942	The Allies are victorious in The Battle of Bloody Ridge & the Battle of Cape Esperance off Guadalcanal.
Nov 1942	The Japanese are victorious in the naval Battle of Tasafaronga in 'Ironbottom Sound'.
Dec 1942	With Japanese supply lines cut off and troops undergoing heavy losses, the Japanese secretly begin evacuations. Guadalcanal becomes known to Japanese soldiers as 'Starvation Island'.
Feb 1943	The Japanese complete evacuation of Guadalcanal and the grueling battle ends in Allied victory.
Apr 1943	The Japanese launch Operation I-Go, a bombing campaign in the Solomons and New Guinea. Admiral Yamamoto is killed when his plane is tracked and shot down over Bougainville Island.
Jun 1943	The Allies begin the New Georgia Campaign, part of the larger Operation Cartwheel to isolate Rabaul.
Aug 1943	John F. Kennedy's PT-109 is cut in half by destroyer <i>Amagiri</i> in the Blackett Strait near Ghizo Island. The Allies are victorious in the Battle of Vela Gulf. The New Britain Campaign ends in Allied victory.
Nov 1943	US and NZ troops begin the long, bloody Bougainville Campaign that will last until the end of the war.



The Solomon Islands Campaign was a major series of battles beginning with attacks on the newly-built Japanese sea and airbase on Tulagi (a small island north of Guadalcanal) in the Battle of the Coral Sea in May of 1942. This was followed by the 6-month long Guadalcanal Campaign (Aug '42-Feb '43), the New Georgia Campaign (June-Aug '43) and the grueling Bougainville Campaign from Nov' 43 to the end of the war. It was a comprehensive strategic effort that played a pivotal role in shifting the momentum of the war in favor of the Allies by: **1)** beginning the allied counteroffensive that would halt and soon reverse the path of Japanese expansion **2)** neutralizing Japan's newly constructed airbase on Guadalcanal (to be renamed Henderson Field by the Americans) **3)** isolating Japan's major airbase at Rabaul on the island of New Britain in the nearby Bismarcks, and **4)** preserving allied communication and supply lines with Australia and establishing bases for future Pacific operations. All of the above were also integral to the nearby New Guinea Campaign. Geographically and strategically, the 2 campaigns overlapped on Bougainville Island. The taking of Guadalcanal by the first Allied amphibious invasion of the war was the first large-scale land victory over the Japanese and marked a major turning point. The Solomons Campaign in Melanesia occurred early in the Pacific War and set the stage for the later Allied campaigns in Micronesia that were designed to move toward the Philippines and ultimately to Japan's home islands:



MICRONESIA

- NORTHERN MARIANA IS. (U.S.)
- MARSHALL ISLANDS
- MARIANAS
- CAROLINES
- MARSHALLS
- GILBERTS
- PALAU
- FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA
- MAJURO
- BALIRIKI
- YAREN
- NAURU
- KIRIBATI
- EQUATOR

MELANESIA

- INDONESIA
- PAPUA NEW GUINEA (Port Moresby)
- SOLOMON IS. (Honiara)
- VANUATU (Vila)
- NEW CALEDONIA (FR.)
- AUSTRALIA

POLYNESIA

- HAWAIIAN IS. (U.S.)
- TUVALU (Fongafale)
- TOKELAU (N.Z.)
- SAMOA (Apia)
- WALLIS AND FUTUNA (FR.)
- TONGA
- FIJI (Suva)
- NIUE (N.Z.)
- COOK IS. (N.Z.)
- FRENCH POLYNESIA (FR.)
- AMERICAN SAMOA

JAPAN (indicated by a red arrow pointing west)

PHILIPPINES (indicated by a red arrow pointing west)

GUAM (U.S.) (indicated by a red arrow pointing west)

PACIFIC OCEAN

A more detailed timeline of **The Solomon Islands Campaign** here:

1942	
April	Japan's Operation Mo begins, aimed at capturing Port Moresby in New Guinea and Tulagi in the British Solomons .
May	The Japanese succeed in taking Tulagi and begin building a major sea and air base. Battle of the Coral Sea - The Japanese invasion of Port Moresby is thwarted. Tulagi is bombed but the Japanese quickly rebuild and keep it operational.
June	Battle of Midway - Although not part of the Solomons Campaign, the Allied victory at Midway ('The Turning Point') significantly weakens Japanese naval capabilities.
July	The Japanese occupy Guadalcanal and rapidly begin building a major air base.
August	The Guadalcanal Campaign - The Allies take Tulagi and begin landings on Guadalcanal to take back the island in the first major Allied amphibious offensive in the Pacific. The Japanese airfield is captured Aug 8 (and renamed Henderson Field), removing a major Japanese threat and providing a key asset for the Allies. It will take 6 months of grueling battle for the Allies to expel the Japanese and reclaim the island.
	Battle of Savo Island results in a major Japanese naval victory.
	Battle of the Eastern Solomons results in U.S. hindering Japanese reinforcements to the area by controlling Tulagi and Florida Island and the waters around Guadalcanal.
October	The Battle of Cape Esperance at the northern tip of Guadalcanal results in a night combat Allied victory.
	Battle of the Santa Cruz Islands results in a tactical Japanese victory, at great cost.
November	Naval Battle of Guadalcanal - the Allies fend off a major Japanese bombardment.
November	Battle of Tassafaronga on north shore of Guadalcanal - Japanese victory as the Imperial Japanese Navy inflicts heavy damage on Allied ships in 'Ironbottom Sound'.
1943	The Japanese evacuate Guadalcanal (' Operation Ke ') after months of fierce but fruitless fighting on the island they would come to call 'Starvation Island' due to successful Allied efforts to prevent re-supply and reinforcements. The Allies complete the recapture of Guadalcanal on Feb 9, 1942. The 6-month battle has taken 7000 Allied lives and 19,000 Japanese lives. It marks the end of major Japanese offensives
Jan-Feb	
Feb-November	Continued fighting in western, central and northern Solomons, including Allied landings on Rendova in June-July, Allied victory in the Battle of Munda Point on New Georgia in August, and Allied victory on Vella Lavella in October. John F. Kennedy's PT-109 was rammed and split in half by Japanese destroyer <i>Amagiri</i> on August 2, 1943 off of the Japanese stronghold island of Kolombangara in the western Solomons.
November thru the end of the war Aug 1945	The Bougainville Campaign to take back Bougainville Island (geographically part of the Solomon Archipelago but politically part of Papua New Guinea) was part of Operation Cartwheel to isolate and neutralize Japan's major airbase at Rabaul on New Britain in the Bismarcks. 21,000 Japanese soldiers lost their lives in their failed effort to resist the Allied onslaught, as did 727 Americans and 516 Australians.