

# JAPANESE ATTACK IN KOKODA AREA

## Mopping-Up Continues At Milne Bay

**THE Japanese are attacking Australian forward posts in Kokoda region. Our ground forces, closely supported from the air, are stoutly resisting.**

Scattered jungle fighting of a guerilla nature also is reported at Milne Bay, where the remnants of the Japanese invasion force are bottled up in the narrow confines of the northern peninsula.

This is a continuance of mopping up operations reported in Tuesday's communique.

There is as yet no definite evidence that the Japanese actually used flame throwers against the Australians in the fighting at Milne Bay but it has been officially confirmed that flame throwers were among the enemy equipment captured.

Apparently the enemy has strengthened his advance forces at Kokoda with the object of pushing our patrols back towards the natural defence line of the Owen Stanley Range.

There is no direct evidence, however, that he has pushed up troops from Gona in anything like sufficient strength for a back-door bid for strongly-held Port Moresby.

**The Japanese are still operating in the rough, broken, jungle-clad hills below the main gap through the mountains and have not yet come up against the natural difficulties which bar the way to Port Moresby.**

It may be that the new enemy thrusts from Kokoda have been for the purpose of creating a protective front for his use of Kokoda airfield, which he seized some time ago.

### SEE-SAW CONFLICT.

Ever since the Japanese pushed inland from Gona the fighting has seen-sawed in and around Kokoda with the airfield as the prize.

This airfield, if made tenable by ground protection, would be useful to the Japanese as a fighter base for the interception of Allied bombers en route and returning from raids on Lae, Salamana and Rabaul.

**It would, however, be under the constant threat of our air fighter strafing from Port Moresby, only ten minutes' flying time away.**

In a close fight the Australian advance patrols have shown them-

selves capable of playing the Japanese at their own game in the jungle, and evidence is accumulating that the enemy in New Guinea has not lived up to his Malayan reputation.

The Australians' brilliant success at Milne Bay is another case in point.

### JAPANESE ADVANTAGE.

In the Kokoda area the Japanese so far have had the tremendous advantage of good supply routes running all the way back to their seafront base at Gona.

In contrast supplies for our advance forces have to be carried from Port Moresby through an 8000 feet gap in the Owen Stanley Range.

This pass is so precipitous at one place that porters have to crawl on hands and knees.

Our ground forces south of the range, however, are being strongly supported from the air.

On Tuesday our fighters brought aid to ground patrols by heavily strafing enemy rear positions and lines of communication.

### OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE.

The following communique was issued by General Headquarters in the South-west Pacific area yesterday:—

#### NORTH-WESTERN SECTOR.

Activity was limited to reconnaissance.

#### NORTH-EASTERN SECTOR.

**KOKODA.**—Our ground forces are closely engaged in jungle fighting against enemy thrusts of increasing strength. Allied fighters are in close support and made two heavy strafing attacks on enemy positions and lines of communication.

**MILNE BAY.**—Scattered jungle fighting of the guerilla type continues.

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