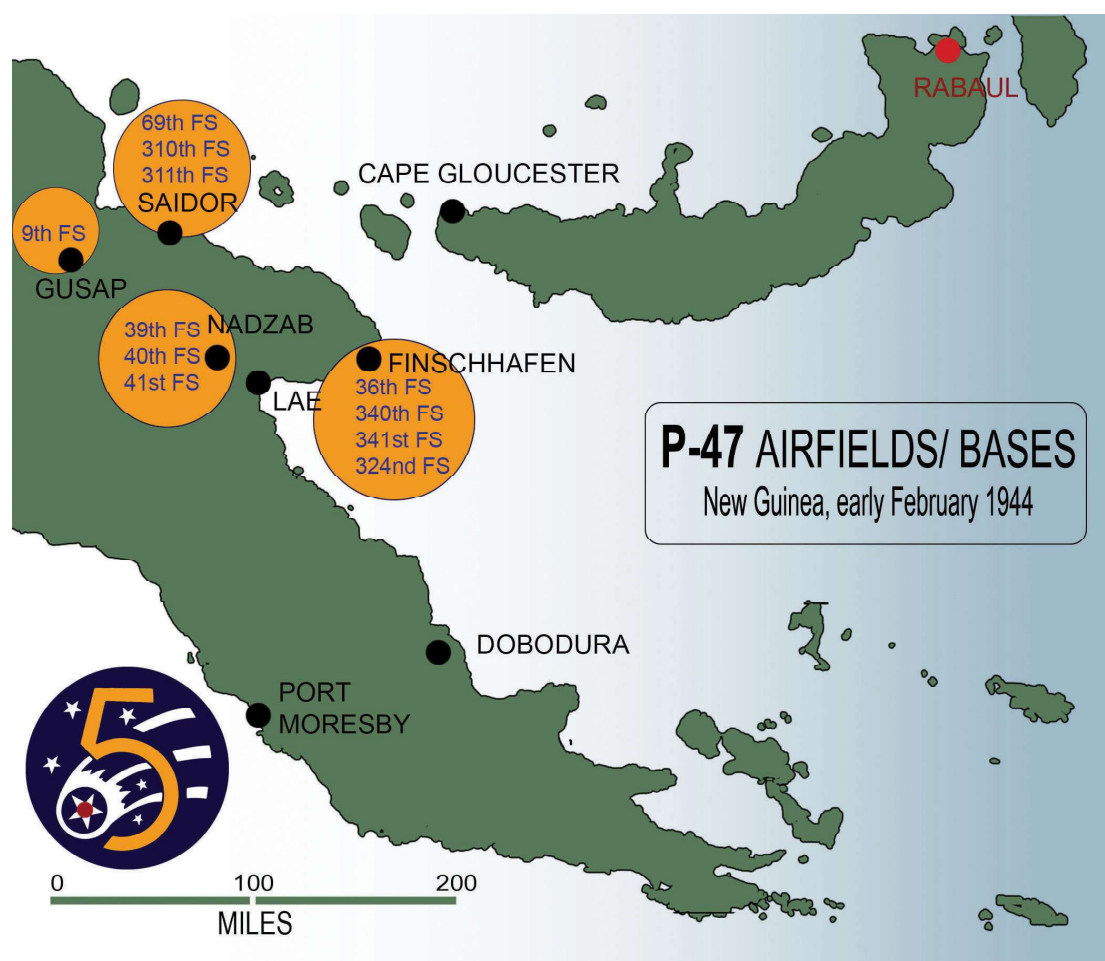


PACIFIC PROFILES

shore. Post-war data shows that Thunderbolt pilots in New Guinea, alongside their Japanese counterparts, overclaimed their aerial victories on an average of about four to one.

The opportunity for air combat all but evaporated once the Thunderbolt left New Guinea. With Japanese aerial opposition all but wiped out by March 1944, in the later Netherlands East Indies and Philippine campaigns the Thunderbolt was used primarily as a ground-attack aircraft as increasing numbers of “bubbletops” entered service.

Michael John Claringbould
Canberra, Australia
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A map showing key airbases used by Fifth Air Force P-47 squadrons in New Guinea during 1943-1944. Lacking the range to reach Rabaul, Thunderbolts mainly saw service along New Guinea's northern coastline where Japanese bases were located to the west of this map. P-47s also served with the Combat Replacement Training Center at Nadzab in an operational training role as late as mid-1945.