



*A theatre map showing the locations of the three key island groups featuring in this narrative: New Caledonia, the New Hebrides and the Solomon Islands. The inset map shows the relative location of this area to the key Japanese base of Rabaul. Fiji also features in this narrative but couldn't be fitted on a map of this scale. Fiji is approximately 600 miles to the east of the New Hebrides.*

*At the start of August 1942 Tulagi and Henderson Field (Lunga) were in Japanese hands. The almost completed airfield at Lunga on Guadalcanal was the first airfield in the Solomon Islands. At that time the only other airfield between Guadalcanal and Rabaul was a small grassed strip at Buka, on the island of Bougainville (which was part of the territory of New Guinea rather than the Solomons).*

*The location marked as the "Shortlands" was located midway between Rabaul and Guadalcanal. It was a collection of islands with several locations suitable for anchorages and seaplane moorings, and soon became an important Japanese base. It was used for seaplane operations and also served as a logistics hub for ships running supplies to Guadalcanal. Other forward seaplane bases were established at Gizo and Rekata Bay. Buin, on the southern tip of Bougainville, had an airfield under construction in September 1942. The waterway running through the Solomons (i.e. a line from the Shortlands to Henderson Field) became known as *The Slot*.*

*Most of the USN carrier operations described in this volume occurred in an approximate triangle bounded by Guadalcanal, Ndeni (in the Santa Cruz Islands) and Espiritu Santo.*