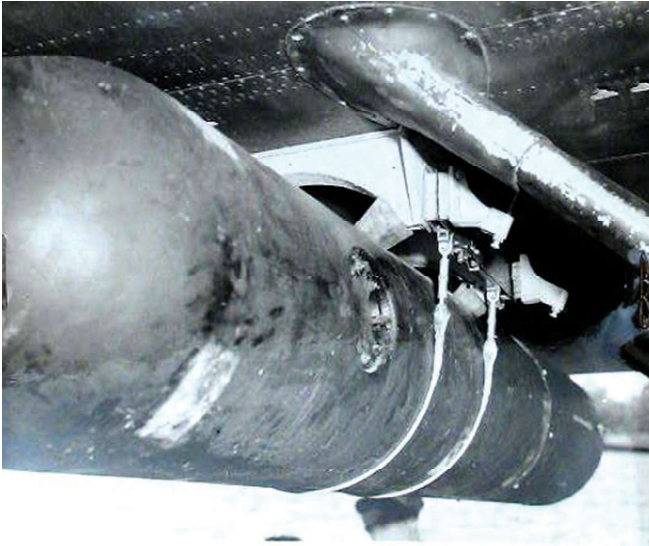


MAY 1943 – AUGUST 1945: VICTORY AND VINDICATION



*An American Mark 12 mine loaded on the torpedo rack of an RAAF Catalina.*

target area, such as identifying new datum points for future missions and searching for alternative anchorages to which shipping might be diverted.

When safely clear of target areas crews could climb to higher altitudes for return flights: these could be up to 10,000 feet, depending on weather conditions.

The success of the minelaying operations reflected rigorous planning and the high efficiency, skill and determination of the Catalina crews, particularly the hard-worked navigators.

The subsequent minelaying campaign was the sum of three distinct sub-campaigns that were carried out over a period exceeding two years, extended over a vast area and had varying objectives. These sub-campaigns were:

- April 1943 – November 1943: Mining of Kavieng and Lorengau Harbours
- July 1943 – July 1945: Mining of waterways in the Netherlands East Indies and China to disrupt Japanese merchant shipping
- April 1944 – December 1944: Tactical mining to support military operations

The first of these minelaying sub-campaigns commenced on 22 April 1943 when eight aircraft from Nos. 11 and 20 Squadrons took off from Cairns to drop sixteen mines in Silver Sound, in the approaches to Kavieng harbour.



*PBY-5 A24-59 (RB-L) as serving with No. 20 Squadron in early 1944. It has two tone (Dark Ocean Blue and Extra Dark Sea Grey) camouflage and Night Black under surfaces.*