

PACIFIC ADVERSARIES

forces at play would result without it. The reader will wish to draw their own assessments, but I hope you enjoy these narratives as much as I did in researching them.

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The red arrow on this map shows the oceanic route known as The Slot, which ran through the Solomon Islands. After the Japanese withdrawal from Guadalcanal in early 1943, their bases in the upper Solomons at Munda, Vila and Rekata Bay came under threat as Allied forces pushed north throughout the year. This led to an increased importance in the Japanese bases in the area known as the Shortlands off the southern tip of Bougainville: Buin (called Kahili by the Americans), Faisi and Ballale. The main Japanese bomber and support bases were at Rabaul (Vunakanau) and Kavieng.