

# October 21, 1942

## The Ultimate Sacrifice

### GUADALCANAL, SOLOMON ISLANDS

Stockton, California, native Billy Hebert becomes the first professional baseball player to be killed in World War II when he succumbs to wounds suffered one week earlier at Guadalcanal's Henderson Field after the airfield and his unit are shelled by Japanese battleships Kongo and Haruna on the night of October 13/14.

Graduating into the professional ranks from Stockton's Karl Ross American Legion program, Hebert signs with the Cincinnati Reds in 1939 for the princely sum of \$75 per month.

Debuting with the Pioneer (C) League's Ogden Reds, Hebert finishes his rookie campaign with a .302 batting average, 30 doubles, nine triples and 52 RBIs.

Picked up by the Oakland Oaks in 1940, Hebert is released prior to the start of the season. Signing with the Merced Bears of the California (C) League in 1941, Hebert has 31 doubles, 17 triples and 12 home runs in 130 games and leads the Bears in hitting (.328).

Shortly after the end of the season, he enters military service and on July 14, 1942, Hebert leaves for the Pacific where he is assigned to Henderson Field to keep the island's airplanes serviceable.

