the course of action which offers the greatest promise of success in view of the enemy capabilities. The process of decision, as approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and taught in all service schools, is formalized in a five-step analysis called the *Estimate of the Situation*. These steps are illustrated in the following analysis of an actual World War II battle situation.

**Fig. 1. The Rabaul-Lae Convoy Situation.** The problem is the distribution of reconnaissance to locate a convoy which may sail by either one of two routes.

**THE RABAUL-LAE CONVOY SITUATION**

General Kenney was Commander of the Allied Air Forces in the Southwest Pacific Area. The struggle for New Guinea reached a critical stage in February 1943. Intelligence reports indicated a Japanese troop and supply convoy was assembling at Rabaul (see Fig. 1). Lae was expected to be the unloading point. With this general background Kenney proceeded to make his five-step Estimate of the Situation.